Reading Michael Psellos

Edited by
Charles Barber and
David Jenkins

THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN * BRILL

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On the cover: Miniature portrait of Michael Psellos and his pupil Michael Doukas, 12th century, Pantokrator 234, fol. 254.

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Charles Barber would like to dedicate this book to his father and mother, Jeremy and Margarethe Barber

David Jenkins, to his wife, Jeanie

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FOREWORD

These papers originated in a workshop held at the University of Notre Dame in February 2004. That meeting, the first in a series dedicated to Byzantine Intellectual History, brought together a small group of scholars from diverse intellectual traditions to discuss how one might read Michael Psellos (1018–after 1081?). The recent publication of editions of most of the writings produced by Michael Psellos has both facilitated our discussions of this key intellectual figure and has encouraged a series of detailed studies. Furthermore, one of the outcomes of this workshop has been the development of a project to publish extensive translations into English of the works of Michael Psellos. It is to be hoped that this will encourage a wider readership, who will in time come to read Psellos's works in the original Greek, and who will from these encounters learn to understand the value of this engaging and original intellect. Needless to say, Psellos was a very attractive figure, one who deserves to be known beyond a small circle of Byzantinists. He was a courtier, rhetorician, philosopher, polymath, historian, theologian, letter writer, poet, and reluctant monk. His intellectual work brought the legacy of ancient philosophy (largely mediated by neoplatonic commentary) to bear on problems in Christian theology as well as many other issues. Indeed, the intellectual range found in these writings will surprise many readers. The present volume is not intended to encompass all of the possibilities inherent in Psellos' oeuvre. Rather, we offer readings of his texts from a variety of scholarly perspectives: literary, art historical, philosophical and historical. While the approaches on offer are varied, each essay betrays the value of a close reading of the sources.

The editors would like to thank all the participants in this process. In particular we would like to thank the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts in the College of Arts and Letters and the Medieval Institute of Notre. Both institutions supported our workshop and thereby endorsed the continuing value of Byzantine studies at Notre Dame.

Charles Barber David Jenkins

DEALING WITH THE PSELLOS CORPUS: FROM ALLATIUS TO WESTERINK AND THE BIBLIOTHECA TEUBNERIANA

John Duffy

Reading Michael Psellos with fresh eyes and along a wider swathe is a project that becomes increasingly possible and meaningful with the appearance of more and more critical editions of his numerous works.

There was no other Byzantine intellectual as many-sided and productive as this renaissance man of the eleventh century. His *philomatheia* and boundless curiosity led him to explore in writing the highways and byways of ancient and medieval thought, culture and literature, from the grand sweep of historical narrative in his *Chronographia* to the nitty gritty of philology in short treatises, from the high-flying theories of Plato and Proclus to the lowly properties of stones, from the revered theology of Gregory of Nazianzos to the suspect lore of the Chaldaean Oracles, and the list could go on at length. In the standard history of secular Byzantine literature, by Herbert Hunger, the largest index entry by far is claimed by Psellos and the reason is simple: he figures—either as author, presumed author, or expert witness—, in almost every single genre and subcategory of writing covered in that exhaustive two-volume account.

The sheer quantity of the output, not to mention its transmission through the centuries in manuscript form, has always posed a serious bibliographical challenge. The earliest attempt to pull the disparate strands together and to systematically describe the vast oeuvre of Psellos was made by the indefatigable and learned Leo Allatius in the seventeenth century. First published as a short monograph in 1634 his *De Psellis et eorum scriptis diatriba*, after some preliminary discussion of two other figures said to have the name Michael Psellos, introduces our man in inevitably extravagant terms as "the teacher of <emperor> Michael Ducas, who, having achieved the highest distinction in the Republic of Letters, won such an honorable name for himself among men of later times that he obliterated the memory

of those other Pselli, thanks to the sharpness of his mind, the vastness of his learning, the depth of his knowledge, the variety of his arguments, the multitude of his writings, and the splendor of his fame." Dubbing him "omnium πολυγραφώτατος" Allatius goes on to list and describe, in greater or lesser detail of considerable interest, the series of sixteenth and seventeenth century editions (most with Latin translations) of writings ascribed to Psellos, followed by an accounting of further works culled from earlier bibliographical sources and library catalogs, and then, to complete the process, a report on at least ninety additional items that Allatius himself had come across in various manuscript collections. And even after all of this he had to admit that his record was not complete. But he would have been greatly surprised to learn how wide of the mark he was in some instances. For example, he estimated the epistolary output of Psellos to be "around thirty-three" items; the actual number of extant genuine letters is over five hundred.

For three and a half centuries after the time of Allatius there were no further attempts to generate a universal bibliography for the prodigious Psellos. The nearest thing in spirit was the useful index (with work titles, opening and closing words) of the several hundred pieces of Pselliana preserved in the hugely important Paris manuscript of the thirteenth century, *Parisinus graecus* 1182. It was compiled by Constantine Sathas and printed as part of his introduction to an edition, from that manuscript, of orations, letters and other unedited works of the Byzantine polymath. Sathas himself, commenting on the efforts of Allatius, acknowledged that the number of known writings had grown so large by the latter part of the nineteenth century, that a description and expert analysis of them would require a special study and would take many years to complete.

Happily such a study has finally been carried out and has just appeared in print. A Canadian scholar, Paul Moore, after more than twenty years of dedication to the task, has produced a *catalogue raisonné* of the many hundreds of texts and opuscula attributed to Psellos. Called appropriately *Iter Psellianum*, the new research tool provides for each item, in addition to the basic identifying information—work title, *incipit* and *desinit*—, not only a full listing of the manuscript witnesses, but also all printed editions and translations, as well as a complete record of the relevant scholarship in each case up to the year 2000. A bibliography of Psellos, in the broadest sense, is now for the first time a reality.

But what about a modern critical edition of the writings? If a description of the corpus and its transmission proved to be such a daunting undertaking, it is not difficult to appreciate why no one person single-handedly, however courageous and industrious, ever managed to present to the world the full Psellos edited according to even minimally acceptable scholarly standards. Leaving out of the picture the large number of printed editions of single items or small collections that appeared between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries, it is possible to point to only a very few attempts to make available under one cover significant groups of works. The first of these, in essence a reprint undertaking, was a volume of the *Patrologia Graeca* series (no. 122), published in Paris in the 1860's by J. P. Migne. The largest share of the volume (which contained also some of the historical works of George Cedrenus and John Scylitzes)—around six hundred and fifty columns with Greek texts, Latin translations and notes—, is devoted to reproducing a number of Psellos treatises from earlier editions, arranged into the four broad subject categories of theology, law, philosophy and history. The title page announces both comprehensiveness and novelty: *Michaelis Pselli opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia nunc primum in unum collecta.* However, despite the extravagant claims of the enterprising Frenchman, made in the immediate vicinity of Allatius' tabulations which he also reprints, the twenty-five texts that he offers (and those by no means free of spuria) turn out to be in retrospect a mere fraction of the total oeuvre. Again, to take the letters as an easy example, Migne makes available a dozen and not all of the twelve are genuine.

Another milestone was reached later in the nineteenth century when Constantine Sathas, already mentioned, used the entire fifth volume of his *Mesaionike Bibliotheke* to print a large amount of Psellos material preserved in the *Parisinus graecus* 1182. From that collection he made available fourteen orations of various kinds, over two hundred of the letters, and a small group of shorter miscellaneous treatises. Though it was not a critical edition in any real sense, it was a major accomplishment and performed a great service for Psellos studies for many years.

A significant step forward, and one more in line with modern scholarly expectations, was achieved by the publication of the two volumes of *Scripta minora* that appeared under the names of E. Kurtz and F. Drexl in the late thirties and early forties of the last century. Here for the first time was an edition based on the main manuscript

witnesses, complete with two sets of apparatus (variant readings and intertextual references), and provided with rich sets of indices. The first volume (1936) offered some fifty-two texts of prose and verse, comprising orations and a variety of shorter writings, and many of these for the first time. The companion volume (1942) brought to light over two hundred previously unpublished letters, along with some sixty more that had been printed by earlier scholars other than Sathas.

Then, after Kurtz-Drexl, came the Westerink era.

Michael Psellos was looming large in the thoughts of L. G. Westerink at the beginning of 1972. The personal file that he labeled "Psellus Correspondence" has for its first item a letter written in February of that year to Günther Christian Hansen at the German Academy of Sciences in East Berlin, the editor of the Teubner series of Greek and Latin authors, and himself an outstanding philologist. Here the mind-boggling idea of a collected edition of Psellos is proposed in one paragraph of a dozen lines, all calm, polite and in impeccably idiomatic German. The opening sentence simply states, "In the last number of years I have turned my attention increasingly to Byzantine literature and recently I have also resurrected the old plan for a complete Psellos edition."

The mention of the "old plan" must mean that L. G. W. had already some years before this broached the subject with Hansen or his predecessor. But that would not have been, by a long shot, the beginning of the story. One of the indications that the "plan" went deep into the past is to be found in a short letter that L. G. W. wrote, also in February 1972, to Hans-Georg Beck, the leading German Byzantinist of the day. It was an enquiry about the possible fate of the papers of E. Kurtz and begins with the statement that, some thirty years previously, he had been informed by F. Drexl that he (Drexl) had still enough material for at least a third volume of *Scripta minora*. Since Drexl had died soon afterwards, Westerink was now wondering what might have become of that material. What the episode clearly shows is that sometime in the early forties L. G. W. had written to Drexl to ask if there were more of the minor writings of Psellos to come out in print. That is precisely the period in which Westerink, then in his native Holland, was himself working on the edition of Psellos' *De omnifaria doctrina*, a critical text and introduction eventually accepted for the degree of D. Litt. at the University of Nijmegen in 1948 and published in the same year.

The *De omnifaria doctrina*, however, was just the tip of the iceberg, when it came to the young scholar's interest in Psellos. There are good reasons to believe that throughout the 1940's (and possibly before that) L. G. W. was laying the groundwork for a major assault on large sections of the Psellan corpus. The evidence, surviving among his papers, is in two forms. The first is his personal annotated copies of the *Patrologia Graeca* vol. 122 and of Sathas *Mesaionike Bibliotheke* vol. 5. The Migne is particularly interesting, because it was first unbound, then a blank sheet of good quality paper was inserted before every page of the Psellos texts, and finally the whole was rebound. The notes in pencil and pen on those intercalated leaves in the hand of L. G. W. (variant readings, corrections, emendations, intertextual references) attest to a long-standing preoccupation with the complete range of printed Psellos texts. The second form of evidence is a series of notebooks, in Dutch and Latin, each one devoted to a different aspect of Psellos research, such as "Bibliography", "Manuscripts", "Testimonia", "The Letters". In addition to these there are also many handwritten transcriptions of unedited texts, some of which would eventually make their way into the hands of the Psellos team of editors.

Which brings us back to 1972. By this time L. G. W. had been at the State University of New York at Buffalo for seven years in his first professorial appointment and, having just completed the second installment of the *Scripta Minora* of Arethas for the Teubner series, he was now deeply committed to several other multi-volume editing tasks, including the *Epistulae* and *Amphilochia* of Photios and the *Théologie Platonicienne* of Proclus. We may assume that, on the verge of his sixtieth birthday and unwilling to let go of a project that had been sometimes to the fore and sometimes in the back of his mind for half a lifetime, he decided to take the plunge and to assemble a group of younger scholars to share the labor of producing a collected Psellos edition.

When the response of the Teubner Verlag to the proposal came back it was encouraging and Westerink quickly put together for the publisher a provisional plan for *Michaelis Pselli Opera* which divided the materials according to subject matter into fourteen volumes. Over the course of the next five years things moved slowly but surely on several fronts. It became known, for instance, that two European scholars had independent intentions to edit parts of the corpus and L. G. W., *lente festinans* and polite as always, took the trouble to

clarify the situation before assigning some of the volumes for the new series. In the meantime, for those works involving no possible conflict of interest, he began to approach potential editors in the United States and Canada. This process too took time. Some invitees after reflection decided that, despite the merits of the undertaking, they could not participate, and so it became necessary to look further afield. Others, in view of existing scholarly obligations, had to wait before they could make a definite commitment. Finally, by 1977, a group of seven editors had signed on to prepare a volume each, and the project was officially announced in the course of that year in the leading Byzantine journals.

This is the English version of the original announcement as prepared by Westerink:

> Teubner Texts of Psellus
>
> Editions of some major groups of writings of Michael Psellus are being prepared for the Bibliotheca Teubneriana (edited for the Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR by Dr. G. Chr. Hansen, Berlin). Whether the project can, and should, eventually be expanded into a complete collected edition will be a matter for later consideration. For the present the following volumes are in a more or less advanced stage of planning or preparation:
>
> Orationes hagiographicae (Elizabeth Fisher, Washington).
> Orationes funebres (K. Snipes, Chapel Hill, N. C.).
> Orationes panegyricae; orationes forenses (including documents) (G. T. Dennis, Washington).
> Oratoria minora (A. R. Littlewood, London, Ontario).
> Commentarius in librum De interpretatione (J. Whittaker, St. John's Newfoundland).
> Tractatus philosophici (J. M. Duffy and D. J. O'Meara, Washington).
> Poemata didactica (L. G. Westerink, Buffalo).
>
> The format will be the usual one of the series: a definitive critical text with full indices for each volume. The project does not attempt to supersede existing editions with translation or commentary or make future publications of this kind superfluous. Since, however, Psellus' extant work totals over four thousand Teubner pages, only a few hundred of which have been properly indexed, it is felt that this is the only way to make this vast body of writing accessible for the purposes of history, theology, philosophy and lexicography.

One can see reflected here characteristic trademarks of the project's leader, beginning with the realistic note of caution about a possible expansion towards a full collection. The closing paragraph echoes

the core of his philosophy of editing Byzantine literature in general and the works of Psellos in particular. The best statement of those principles appeared a few years previously in an essay on "L'édition des textes byzantins," which formed the Avant-Propos to his 1973 book *Nicétas Magistros: Lettres d'un exilé*. It was a stirring apologia for the strict application of traditional philological methods to medieval Greek literature, founded on the reasoning that, if we want to use Byzantine texts for any kind of historical purpose, we must prepare critical editions based on the complete fund of extant manuscripts. To illustrate and drive home the point he brings the essay to a close by citing the case of the correspondence of Psellos, "The edition of Psellos' letters by Kurtz-Drexl, however valuable, does not provide information on the material variants (in particular, the names of the addressees) that separate the Italian manuscripts, used by Kurtz, from the *Parisinus graecus* 1182 as edited by Sathas. All of these issues—the state of the text, authenticity, connection with historical facts—, can only be resolved with the help of all the available manuscript witnesses. In short, no edition will be truly useful unless it takes into account the entire tradition." Statements of principle in Westerink's case were backed by years of experience and practice in text editing and their application was on very early display in the exemplary 1948 text of the *De omnifaria doctrina*. In that "complete critical edition", as he called it in the introduction, he emerged from the jungle of manuscripts to establish convincingly and for the first time the four distinct redactions of the work that Psellos had issued at different times in his career.

For Teubner each editor, including the leader, signed a separate contract and the project went into motion, guided at every phase to the extent necessary by L. G. W. His role in the early stages saw him issue, in the interests of consistency, a set of guidelines in addition to the Teubner inhouse rules. These laid out, in precise and sensible detail, advice for the handling of diverse facets of the work, from the establishment of sigla for designating the enormous number of text witnesses to be used—many of them common to several of the volumes—, to the creation of three sets of indices (citations, names, and words), a feature of the enterprise that he had always emphasized. For the text itself he suggested the following modus operandi, "If divergences between manuscripts exceed the measure of normal copyists' errors, the probability is that we have to do with

a revision by (or commissioned by) Psellos himself. In these cases it is best not to mix the versions, but to base the text on one recension (obvious errors excepted), relegating the others to the apparatus criticus."

It was far more time consuming and costly to secure the material base of the project. If each volume was to present a "definitive critical text", as promised in the original announcement, that meant that every witness for every work had to be located and a film or photocopy purchased. Over the course of several years, often aided by a mutually beneficial exchange of information with P. Moore as he gathered materials for *Iter Psellianum*, L. G. W. issued a series of lists to the editors, and by the time the last one was prepared the number of manuscripts had passed the 500 mark. Fortunately at his home institution he had been appointed to the endowed Andrew Raymond Chair of Classics in 1975 and now had available special funds for research expenses. Countless requests were sent out from Buffalo to libraries in Europe and elsewhere, a process that was time-consuming, often frustrating, but occasionally also affording moments or episodes of light relief.

Once, when an order for parts of fifteen manuscripts was submitted to a German library, it elicited a counter-request from the Leiter der Handschriftenabteilung for an explanation, "because of the unusual size of the order." L. G. W. wrote back to say that the copies were necessary for an edition of Psellos, and as for the size of the request, the only excuse he could offer for himself was "dass Psellos nun einmal zuviel geschrieben hat und zuviel abgeschrieben worden ist." He might have added a pertinent cultural gloss, one of his own sentences from the 1973 Avant-Propos essay, "Le chemin vers la gloire littéraire, à Byzance, c'était la polymathie et la polygraphie," but that would have spoiled the fun.

At another stage he was trying to obtain copies from one of the Patriarchal libraries in the East and wrote a highly respectful letter to His Beatitude requesting permission for the photography to be done. Shortly thereafter, through the gracious librarian, he was informed that the 164 postcard size photos in question would cost $164. The check for the amount was duly sent, but nine months later, because nothing had happened, he had to write again to ask if the money had been received, and if not, he was prepared to set the matter right. Finally, the following charming missive, in the hand

of the librarian, arrived in Buffalo, as if from a different world and another age:

> Greetings!
>
> Today I am glad to communicate, once more, a few thoughts with you on the subject of one hundred and sixty four post cards depicting texts from manuscripts you eagerly have requested, almost two years ago, from the Patriarchal Library's Department of Manuscripts! Asked yesterday by His Eminence the Metropolitan of—, who has just arrived from His annual vacation, to be at His office in a relatively short time after His notification, I presented myself before the Vicar General (of His Beatitude the Patriarch) with due respect. I waited somehow perplexed until the time came when the Exarch of the—Patriarchate got away with His blessing. I found myself in front of His Eminence. After a brief discussion we had on matters of Patriarchal policy and its Institute's status, He suddenly looked radiant. He casually presented the long wanted cheque of one hundred and sixty four US dollars (N.Y. Bank, July 30, 19—, no. 41642312). I looked at my watch. It was almost 11 o'clock. I can now carry on.
>
> No further detail. Oliver Wendell Holmes said: "Logic is logic, that's all I say" at the very end of "The Deacon's Masterpiece." I take this opportunity to add my sad comment: "Research is research," i.e. it has to be done systematically, and in due time, not in two years as it is understood here in—.
>
> With very good wishes, I am Sir
> yours sincerely
> ——.

During the years in which the early volumes were in preparation L. G. W. was always quietly in the background and at the ready to supply manuscript materials, offer advice, or write letters of support when individual editors applied for leaves or fellowship time to work on Psellos, but he never hovered over the project, as that was not his style. I have described elsewhere his way of relating to doctoral students under his supervision and the passage may be appropriately repeated here: "In keeping with his general mode of dealing with students and collaborators, Westerink gave a long leash to dissertation writers; never intrusive, he was always there when needed. Perhaps there were occasions when a bit of prodding was called for and might have been beneficial, but that would have amounted to pressure and it was not in his nature to apply it. Once installments of work were submitted to him, they came back usually with surprising speed, the margins decked out with neatly pencilled and lightly written scholia; there was no wasting of time or space; corrections big and small were

> pointed out in a matter-of-fact manner; hints for further exploration were politely given, and in the case of texts, emendations were modestly proposed and concisely supported. The tone of the whole exercise was one of efficiency and helpfulness."[1] The Psellos project was handled in the same spirit.

By the time that the first volume of the new Teubner edition appeared in 1985 Westerink had already reached retirement age, but it was retirement in name only, as his work on multiple undertakings continued unabated. In that year he was not only preparing his own volume of the *Poemata*, but was also taking care of a recent windfall for the Psellos collection. Following the premature death of Fr. Paul Gautier, a leading Psellos expert among the Assumptionist Fathers in Paris, a portion of his Nachlass was sent to L. G. W. for his inspection. It was an almost completed edition of 114 pieces of exegesis (in a sense, lecture notes) on Gregory of Nazianzus, from the *Parisinus graecus* 1182 and never before published. Westerink of course was familiar with these and had always wanted to see them in a volume of theological writings, but had not assigned them to anyone, since he knew of Gautier's interest. Seizing the opportunity he quickly contacted Teubner and reached agreement for their inclusion in the series as *Theologica I*. He himself, in typical fashion, not only revised and prepared the work for printing but also composed a short Latin introduction for each item, a general preface, and a set of indices to complete the volume, which appeared in 1989. By the summer of that year he had also finished and submitted to the printer his own edition of the *Poemata*. With that off his hands he immediately turned his mind to a second volume of *Theologica* to take care of the remaining treatises and pieces of exegesis on subjects other than Gregory of Nazianzos. He had long been searching for someone to undertake this, but seeing the chances not improving, he now took the initiative himself in the overall interest of the project. In one of the last pieces of correspondence from Teubner, dated May 6, 1989, the editor of the series responded to the news, "We are very happy that you have decided yourself to take care of

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[1] Duffy (2002) "Byzantium in Buffalo: From the Life and Works of L. G. Westerink," 285–296, here 292.

the *Theologica II* volume. I think that not only the publisher and the editorial staff of the *Bibliotheca Teubneriana*, but also many colleagues both now and in the future will be grateful to you for it." In its way it was a fitting tribute and emblematic of a special relationship of mutual respect that had developed over the course of the twenty years in which Westerink had published ten volumes of Arethas, Olympiodorus, Photios and Psellos in that distinguished series under the courteous and ever helpful eye of G. Chr. Hansen.

Little did either side suspect that the relationship was soon to end. Less than nine months later L. G. Westerink passed away suddenly, after a brief illness, in January 1990. At the time of his death there was left in his typewriter (he had recently acquired a computer, but had not yet begun using it for texts) a page of Psellos that was destined for the *Theologica II* volume already well underway.

For the modern phase of work on Psellos this essay has been largely about L. G. Westerink and not at all about the editors of the individual volumes in the series. That is a subject for a later time perhaps and a different teller. Two other members of the original group, H. K. Snipes and J. Whittaker, suffered untimely deaths, and new editors have since joined the effort. The project continues to make progress, but whether it "can, and should, eventually be expanded into a complete collected edition", as L. G. W. remarked in 1977, is still not settled. What is clear, however, is that the expedition that set out to scale Psellos in the 1970's could not have reached as far as it has without the scholarly courage, leadership and dedication of Leendert G. Westerink.

Current State of the Edition

1. Published

Oratoria minora, ed. A. R. Littlewood (Leipzig, 1985)
Theologica I, ed. P. Gautier (Leipzig, 1989)
Philosophica minora II, ed. D. J. O'Meara (Leipzig, 1989)
Philosophica minora I, ed. J. M. Duffy (Leipzig, 1992)
Poemata, ed. L. G. Westerink (Stuttgart/Leipzig, 1992)
Orationes panegyricae, ed. G. T. Dennis (Stuttgart/Leipzig, 1994)
Orationes forenses et acta, ed. G. T. Dennis (Stuttgart, 1994)
Orationes hagiographicae, ed. E. A. Fisher (Stuttgart, 1994)
Theologica II, ed. L. G. Westerink – J. M. Duffy (Munich/Leipzig, 2002)

2. In Preparation

Tractatus grammatici et rhetorici, ed. A. R. Littlewood
Ceterae disciplinae, ed. A. R. Littlewood
Orationes funebres, ed. P. A. Agapitos – I. D. Polemis
Epistulae, ed. E. Papaioannou

3. Planned

Commentarius in librum De interpretatione, ed. J. M. Duffy – K. Ieradiakonou

IMAGERY IN THE *CHRONOGRAPHIA* OF MICHAEL PSELLOS

Antony R. Littlewood

The vast quantity of surviving Byzantine literature has traditionally been considered, with a mere handful of exceptions, to be completely devoid of literary merit; the sole reason for reading it being the extraction of historical information—and even that was considered as painful as, for patients, the extraction of teeth before the discovery of modern anaesthetics (which, incidentally, is a simile that Psellos would have understood, for one of his minor works, an eulogy of wine, was inspired by a gift of a bottle of a wondrous vintage given him for his services as an amateur dentist in pulling a friend's troublesome tooth).[1] Documentation for this attitude may be found in innumerable published sources, but I shall mention just one, a private inscription to me by the author, a very fine scholar of Byzantine history, in a book largely dependent upon an exhaustive, and for him quite exhausting, culling of Byzantine sources: it reads "From another gatherer of the sour grapes of Byzantine epistolography."

If we were to enquire into the reasons for this attitude, we should probably propose the difficulty of the Greek of nearly all Byzantine texts, especially for the modern fast-paced generation brought up with an impatience for leisurely composition and a dislike, even often an incapacity, for appreciating aesthetically or intellectually complicated verbal structures. A second reason would be the chasm between, on the one hand, the modern cult of originality for its own sake, something not done before being *ipso facto* wonderful irrespective of its artistic merit or, usually, lack thereof, and, on the other hand, the Byzantine love of variations upon a beloved style. We should cite also a comparison with the exciting productions of the Renaissance, forgetting that it had the catalytic advantages of the discovery of an alien culture (that of Classical antiquity) and rude languages whose innate strengths could be wedded to the artistry of this alien culture

[1] *Orat. min.* 30.110–116.

to produce in their fusion something new and virile. Again, a comparison would be made between the quality of most Byzantine literature and the sublime majesty of some Classical literature; although, if we are honest, we must admit that much surviving Greek from antiquity is either pedestrian or unnecessarily contorted (for the latter, what would literary critics have to say about, for instance, Aeschylus' choruses or Thucydides' speeches if they were suddenly proved to be of Byzantine composition?).

For some years now there has nonetheless been an increasingly effective movement to cast aside modern preconceptions of what constitutes good literature and to try to understand Byzantine literature on its own terms, to appreciate what its authors were attempting to achieve.[2] Yet while for the prose and poetry of many other cultures and languages there have been created enormous bodies of literary criticism, Byzantine scholars are far behind and struggling to catch up. This is obvious from the fact that almost no edition of a Byzantine author has literary (or grammatical for that matter) comments in its notes. The interest is still largely in the period of swaddling bands, although some scholars, are tackling the whole concept of Byzantine literary genres; and some have even bravely jumped over the lack of basic literary analysis to apply modern theories—deconstructionalism and so on—to Byzantine literature: I am thinking here of pioneers such as Margaret Mullett, mainly but not exclusively for epistolography,[3] and Jakov Ljubarskij for historiography.[4] But there is still a need for the more elementary approaches, and the present paper is, consequently, something like an old-fashioned undergraduate essay with not a single reference to Bakhtin and his ilk. I intend to look at the imagery, specifically the similes and metaphors, to be found in what is to-day, although almost certainly not in its author's time, the most famous literary production of Michael Psellos, his *Chronographia*.

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[2] This is very notable in e.g. Kazhdan (1999); Odorico (2002); Hörandner (2003); Jeffreys (2003); Lauxtermann (2003). For a summary of approaches see also my chapter on "Literature" in *Palgrave Advances in Byzantine History*, ed. J. Harris (2005) 133–146.

[3] Especially in Mullett (1981) 75–93; Mullet (1990) 258–275; Mullet (1992) 233–243; Mullet (1997); Mullet (2002) 37–60; Mullet (2003) 151–170.

[4] Ljubarskij (1992) 177–186; Ljubarskij (1993) 131–138; Ljubarskij (1995) 317–322; Ljubarskij (1996) 127–142; Ljubarskij (1998) 5–73; and more generally Ljubarskij (2003) 117–125.

In recent years there have appeared two articles on this subject, both showing Psellos' adaptation of a well-known image from Classical antiquity for his own purposes. In 2001 John Duffy examined the Byzantine polymath's use of the Platonic metaphor in the *Phaedrus* of "washing out a salty story with sweet discourse," that is producing a recantation to make up for a foolish untruth that may have slighted the god Eros.[5] Psellos uses the imagery of brine and fresh water ten times to represent usually the opposition between pagan lore and Christian doctrine, but also in connection with philosophy, rhetoric and heresies; and on each occasion there are carefully thought-out differences of expression or application. The other article had appeared earlier, in 1981, when I examined Psellos' play with, again, Platonic imagery, this time one dealing with obstetrics in the *Theaetetus*, in which Socrates makes himself out to be the world's worst midwife in never having successfully helped anybody to give birth to a viable philosophical idea.[6] Psellos uses this, with variations, three times in connection with John Italos and other, anonymous, students' productions, but, un-Platonically, to encourage them in their efforts and also, doubtless, to enhance his reputation as a teacher as he aids them in giving birth to deformed offspring, which he nevertheless loves and succeeds in curing. In a fourth recourse to the theme he refers in contrast to his own work, which has been praised by the nephews of Keroularios as more valuable than those of the ancients, as an abortive child (ἀμβλωθρίδιον), and thus he now approaches the maieutic ruthlessness of his archetypical midwife Socrates.

The only other publication to my knowledge that pays attention to Psellan imagery dates, remarkably, to as long ago as 1920. In his magisterial *Étude de la la langue et du Style de Michel Psellos* Emile Renauld, the second editor of the *Chronographia*, devotes a few pages to metaphors and comparisons,[7] but his information is very summary and usually little more than a list of references for different themes. What I wish to do in this paper is, while restricting myself to the *Chronographia*, to add to Renauld's references and examine more closely how Psellos varies his employment of similes and metaphors. Distinction between the two seems not to have been of

[5] Duffy (2001) 89–96.
[6] Littlewood (1981) 136–142.
[7] Renauld (1920) 477–497.

importance to Psellos,[8] and, similarly, I shall class both tropes together, but observe now that the former is usually introduced by ὡς, ὥσπερ (very common), οἷον, δίκην or some such word or by an apologetic expression like ἵν᾽ οὕτως ἐρῶ. Psellos' favourite themes for imagery—vegetation, animals and especially water—will be emphasized and most of the passages quoted in full[9] in order to show the extraordinary range of expression and variation that constitute his *Selbstvariation* in this connection. Except occasionally in a small way, I have made no attempt to trace the origins of each specific image in the manner of the articles by Duffy and myself mentioned above, since that would have swollen the present work to indigestible length (perhaps others may now be stimulated to choose other specific favorite topics of Psellos for this purpose).[10] Nonetheless, despite the lack of attempt to track down all his images, it is clear that he rarely invented one, although many of his applications are new.

Let us begin with vegetal imagery. Ancient Greek literature is replete with comparisons between plants and humans. Amongst those in Homer[11] we find the imagery of trees for the warrior who dies or is soon to die and also for those standing firm in battle.[12] Still in a military context the "flower of youth" describes Aeneas,[13] whence vegetal imagery becomes applicable to any comely young male (or female), as in the Homeric Hymns.[14] When Odysseus tells Nausikaa that she reminds him of the young shoot of a palm-tree he once observed by the altar of Apollo on Delos[15] the erotic element enters, never to leave. Beginning in Homer comparison is made also between fruits and parts of plants and parts of the human body, most notably

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[8] On their respective importance, treatment and purpose according to the theorists of antiquity see McCall (1969).

[9] All quotations from the *Chronographia* are taken from the edition of S. Impellizzeri (Venice, 1984), although I have not followed his practice of beginning each sentence with a capital letter (but I have capitalized the first letter of Ἀσκληπιάδαις at 7.57.9). All translations, as a rule deliberately literal rather than literary, are my own.

[10] It may also provide the basic material for a study in the nature of Silk (1974).

[11] The most convenient listings of the subject-matter of imagery in Homer (and other early Greek poets) are, still, A. L. Keith's published dissertation for the University of Chicago, *Simile and Metaphor in Greek Poetry from Homer to Aeschylus*, Menasha, Wisconsin, 1914, and W. C. Scott, *The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile*, Leiden 1974.

[12] Keith (1914) 24; Scott (1974) 70–71.

[13] *Il.* 13.484.

[14] E.g. 2.108, 4.375, 10.3

[15] *Od.* 6.163.

with Odysseus' hyacinth locks: and to such an extent was this developed that in the early third century B.C. μηλοῦχος ("apple-holder") was coined as a term for a brassière.[16] This type of comparison became part of the Byzantines' biblical inheritance too as a result of the similes and metaphors of Canticles and their use in Marian imagery; and all of it was continued through Byzantium from antiquity and into the modern period at the level of popular literature.[17] It should be pointed out, however, that Classical literature rarely expands the imagery beyond the simple comparison (Sappho's famous description of a bride as an apple blushing on a tree-top out of the pickers' reach[18] is one of the more extended). What do we find in Psellos?

His very first vegetal image in the *Chronographia* is reminiscent of Homer's dead and dying heroes in that he calls the foot-soldiers gathered by the rebel Bardas Phokas, the finest of the warriors from Iberia, as "all growing a youthful bloom" (1.15.20: πάντας τὸ γένειον καὶ αὐτὸ δὴ τὸ νεοτήσιον ἀποφύοντας ἄνθος); and since Bardas was slain on the field we may presume that many of these young men also died. Homer's other use of the tree simile, for the warrior who stands firm in battle, is approached when Psellos, in praising the courage of the dying emperor Isaac I Komnenos, writes, with deliberate use of an Homeric epithet (ὑψίκομος), that, typically of the man's independent spirit, "like some cypress with lofty foliage being violently shaken by blasts of wind, he tottered as he walked forward, yet he did walk forward" (7.80.3–5: ἀλλ' οἷος ἐκεῖνος ὑψικόμῳ ἐοικὼς κυπαρίττῳ ὥσπερ τισὶ πνεύμασι διατινασσόμενος, κατακεκλόνητο μὲν προϊών, προῄει δέ).

In line with the later Classical imagery devoid of imminent death or steadfastness we find other young men compared with flowers and plants: Michael IV the Paphlagonian, at the time when he aroused Zoë's lust, was blooming (3.18.12: εὐανθής) with a face of extremely ripe beauty (3.18.11–12: τὸ πρόσωπον ἐς ἀκριβῆ ὡραιότητα), Psellan imagery that foreshadows two chapters later Zoë's endearment of

[16] By Leonidas of Tarentum (*Anth. Pal.* 6.211.3).

[17] See Petropoulos (2003) especially 32–36, 61–73. For specifically the imagery of the apple see Littlewood (1967) 147–181; Littlewood (1974) 33–59; Littlewood (1993) 83–103. It is even to be found in serious modern literature: see Littlewood (1978) 37–55.

[18] Fr. 105a(L-P).

him as "flower of beauty" (3.20.8: κάλλους ἄνθος), and which Psellos himself repeats, with slightly different wording, in the following book for the same emperor (4.7.8: ἀνθούσης νεότητος) and, much later, for Michael VII Doukas (7c.3.1: ἀνθοῦντα ἔχων τὸν ἴουλον). More elaborately the young Constantine IX Monomachos "had a blooming complexion and to men of our generation was like the fruit in spring-time" (6.16.5–7: ἀνθοῦν εἶχε τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ οἷον ἐαρινή τις ὀπώρα τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς βίῳ ἐχρημάτιζε). The only woman to whom Psellos applies this imagery is Theodora, when he criticizes the aged empress' counsellors for encouraging her to believe that she was immune to the influence of time and had blossomed again like a young plant (6a.15.20: αὖθις ἀνθῆσαι ὥσπερ νεόφυτον). An adaptation of this imagery he even applies to himself: "for myself, even before the fruit was ripe, the blossom foretold what was to come" (6.44.1–2: ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ τελείου καρποῦ ἡ ἄνθη τὸ μέλλον προεμαντεύετο). Only once in the *Chronographia* is his vegetal imagery negative: "the hair on the head and in the beard [of the dead Romanos III Argyros] are so thinned until his decomposed limbs look like burned-down corn-fields, the bareness of which is seen from afar" (4.4.10–13: τῶν δὲ τριχῶν αἵ τε τῆς κεφαλῆς καὶ ὅσαι περὶ τὸν πώγωνα ἐψίλωντο τοσοῦτον, ἕως ἐοικέναι τὰ διεφθαρμένα μέλη τοῖς ἐξαφθεῖσι ληΐοις, ὧν πόρρωθεν ἡ ψίλωσις καταφαίνεται).

For further vegetal metaphors we may note that when Psellos began to study philosophy he found no "seed of wisdom" (6.37.7: σπέρμα σοφίας) in Greece or the barbarian world; that rhetoric "blossoms with its beauty of diction" (6.197.35: ἀνθεῖ δὲ τῇ καλλιεπείᾳ τῶν λέξεων); and that Theodora sprouted from royal stock (5.35.11: βασιλείου ῥίζης ἐβλάστησεν), imagery which he subsequently expands when commenting that her family was especially blessed by God, a surprising thing since "its root was not fixed in the earth and planted lawfully but by slaughter and bloodshed, yet the plant blossomed out and put forth such great shoots, each with its royal fruit, that others could not compare with it, either for beauty or for greatness" (6.1.8–12: μὴ ἐννόμως αὐταῖς τῆς ῥίζης παγείσης καὶ φυτευθείσης, ἀλλὰ φόνοις καὶ αἵμασιν, οὕτω τὸ φυτευθὲν ἐξηνθήκει καὶ τοσαύτας προὐβάλλετο βλάστας, καὶ ἑκάστην μετὰ τοῦ βασιλείου καρποῦ, ὡς μὴ ἔχειν ἑτέρας ἀντισυγκρῖναι ταύταις, οὔτε πρὸς κάλλος οὔτε πρὸς μέγεθος).

There is another type of vegetal image that is of greater interest. Ancient Greek literature occasionally uses similes of sowing or reap-

ing (starting with Hesiod),[19] but agriculture and especially horticulture tended not to be gentlemanly pursuits, or at least not the sort of which the contemporary literary élite saw fit to write. The Romans, nonetheless, probably in part through Carthaginian influence, considered such matters honorable for a gentleman—and the Byzantines did even more so. Thus Photios tried out on his estate techniques from an agricultural manual,[20] and many emperors interested themselves in the design of gardens.[21] Psellos indeed has a lengthy section on Constantine IX Monomachos' impatient zeal for landscaping, in which he claims that the emperor raised and levelled hills at bewildering speed and had mature trees bearing fruit transplanted to create instant orchards and turf for instant lawns[22] (Constantine, incidentally, was the only Byzantine emperor to meet his death "as a result of his obsession with landscape architecture", in the words of Henry Maguire,[23] when he succumbed to a chill caught while bathing in a pool he had constructed in an imperial garden). Byzantine authors thus see fit to adorn their literature with imagery of agricultural and horticultural techniques. To give a few examples, an anonymous writer describes a saint's desire to stay in his native Cyprus and not be lured away as a desire to set his roots in his own soil and not be transplanted,[24] Manasses compares librarianship to paradisiacal gardening,[25] the anonymous tenth-century Constantinopolitan school-teacher describes literary excisions as the cutting away of offshoots,[26] and Niketas Choniates compares the amputation of fingers with the pruning of vines and impaled captives swaying in the wind with scarecrows in cucumber beds.[27]

Herein Psellos is all Byzantine. Whereas he simply says that Constantine IX "sowed the opportunities" (6.79.7–8: κατέσπειρεν ἀφορμάς) for suspicion in George Maniakes, the same emperor "did not cast the seeds of kindness in a so-to-speak fertile soul so that it should immediately give back the harvest of gratitude; and it did

[19] Fr. 286 (Merkelbach/West).
[20] *Bibl.* 163.
[21] See Littlewood (1997) 13–38.
[22] *Chron.* 6.173–175.
[23] Maguire (2000) 261.
[24] Grégoire (1907) 226, lines 316–320.
[25] *Chron.* 4257–4269.
[26] Anonymus Professor (Londinensis), *Epistulae* 21.1–2.
[27] *Historia* 1.289.74–75, 84–89.

not produce the fruit of thanks more than he was desirous of sowing the earth 'large-clodded and fat'"[28] (6.169.6–11: οὐδὲ εἰς ψυχήν, ἵν᾽ οὕτως εἴποιμι, εὔγεω τὰ τῆς εὐεργεσίας κατεβάλλετο σπέρματα, ὡς εὐθὺς τὸν τῆς εὐγνωμοσύνης στάχυν ἀναδιδόναι, οὐδὲ μᾶλλον ἐκείνη τὸν τῆς εὐχαριστίας ἀπεγέννα καρπόν, ἢ ὁ οὗτος σπείρειν πεφιλοτίμητο τὴν ἐρίβωλον γῆν καὶ πίειραν)". Again, he praises Constantine X Doukas for his moderate financial policy in the following terms: "not rashly spending, not reaping, so to speak, what he had not himself sowed, not gathering in what he had not scattered abroad" (7a.3.3–5: οὔτε ἀπειροκάλως τοῖς ἀναλώμασι χρώμενος, οὔτε θερίζων, ἵν᾽ οὕτως ἐρῶ, ὅσα μὴ αὐτὸς ἔσπειρεν, ἢ συνάγων ὅσα μὴ διεσκόρπισεν). Another operation employed by him is pruning, which first appears in an extended passage about envy: "and if somewhere someone blooms (I am speaking for universal application) either of natural fertility . . . or of some other good quality has shot up, immediately the pruner stands there and that part of the plant is cut out, but the woody and barren parts sprout up alongside and the thorns grow thick" (6.74.7–13: καὶ εἴ πού τις ἄνθη, λέγω δὴ ἐν πᾶσι τὸ πλεῖστον καιροῖς, ἢ γονίμου ἀναβλαστήσειε φύσεως, ἢ φρονήσεως ἀκριβοῦς, ἢ μεγαλοφυΐας, ἢ ψυχῆς καρτερᾶς καὶ ἀνδρείας, ἢ ἀγαθοῦ τινος ἄλλου, εὐθὺς ἐφέστηκεν ὁ τομεύς, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν τὸ μέρος τῆς βλάστης ἐκκέκοπται, παραβλαστάνουσι δὲ τὰ ὑλώδη καὶ ἄκαρπα, καὶ ὑλομανεῖ ἐπὶ πλέον ἡ ἄκανθα). And he concludes this section (6.74.24) with a reminiscence of pruning by using the word ἀποτέμνειν for the cutting off of a helping hand. Similarly he describes Isaac I hastening to cut out the dead wood in the state (7.51.10–11: τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν βασιλείαν ὑλομανήσασαν σπεύδων εὐθὺς ἐκτεμεῖν) and employs the word ἀπορριζόω (7.59.29) for his "uprooting" of evils. His final recourse to an horticultural operation is to grafting in a passage dealing with the future Romanos III marrying his niece Pulcheria to the future Constantine IX: "he conceived an affection for the man in the flower of his manhood . . . and he grafted this extremely beautiful young cutting onto his most fertile garden olive" (6.15.10–13: ἠγαπήκει τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦ τε ἄνθους τῆς ἡλικίας καὶ τῆς τοῦ γένους μεγαλοπρεπείας, καὶ ἐγκεντρίζει τοῦτον τῷ γένει νεόφυτον κάλλιστον εἰς πιότατον καλλιέλαιον).

[28] The two epithets are Homeric, though never thus juxtaposed in *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.

As opposed to his enthusiasm for vegetal metaphors to describe humans, he has little interest in animal imagery. This is rife in Homer, who does, however, and especially for an obvious reason in the Iliad, favor the lion,[29] as does Psellos. Curiously the closest parallel he has to Homer's warrior as a ravening lion relates to a woman, when he says, with deliberate use of an Homeric epithet,[30] that people were afraid of Zoë as if she were a lioness which had opportunely laid aside her bristling appearance (4.17.3–4 ὥσπερ τινὰ λέαιναν ἐν καιρῷ μεθεικυῖαν τὸ βλοσυρόν). But he does tell us that Maniakes had the swift movement (6.77.8: ὅρμημα of a lion.[31] A pun on a name is responsible for his description of Constantine IX ignoring the threat of the now tonsured Leo Tornikios in the belief that "the lion had already been sacrificed, its strong claws drawn" (6.102.8–9: ὡς ἤδη κατατεθυμένου τοῦ λέοντος καὶ τάς τε τῶν ὀνύχων ἀφῃρημένου ἀκμάς). A quite different image occurs when Eudokia desired to "treat him like a lion although he was emperor" (7b.10.19: οἷον τὸν δυναστεύοντα λεοντοκομεῖν), that is as a lion rendered safe by being kept in a cage. Twice Psellos alludes to the proverb of the lion-skin, mocking Michael V Kalaphates as a pigmy playing Herakles as he dressed in the pelt but was weighed down by the club (4.27.4–9: ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις πυγμαῖος ὢν Ἡρακλῆς εἶναι βούλοιτο . . . περιτρεπόμενος μὲν τῇ λεοντῇ, τῷ δὲ ῥοπάλῳ καταπονούμενος); and describing Constantine IX, who in changing his tactics towards the author dons the lion-skin for the monkey pelt, where Psellos' choice of skin rather than animal leads him again to depict an emperor with a club but this time truly brandishing it à la Herakles (6.198.11–13: ἐπεὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρου πειθοῦς ἀπεγνώκει, τὴν κερδαλῆν ἀφεὶς τὴν λεοντῆν ἐπενδύεται καί μοι ἐπανατείνει τὸ ῥόπαλον). His only other leonine reference comes late in the *Chronographia* when he makes the curious parallel between himself holding the future Michael VII in the hope that his words to the prince would be of profit with Herakles wrapping Ajax in his lion-skin[32] (7c.13.1–4: τὸν μὲν οὖν Τελαμώνιον

[29] Used 40 times in the *Iliad* and four times in the *Odyssey*: Keith (1914) 46, Scott (1974) 58–62.

[30] It is first applied to a lion, however, in Hesiod (Sc. 175).

[31] Psellos immediately follows this remark with the information that Maniakes' brow was βλοσυρόν, thus suggesting that beast and adjective were associated in his mind, even if not in Homer's.

[32] This tale appears in the scholia to the *Iliad* (in 23.821).

Αἴαντα τιθηνούμενον ἔτι τὸν Ἡρακλέα φασὶν ἰδεῖν καὶ τῇ λεοντῇ περιβαλεῖν, ἐγὼ δὲ ἠγκαλισάμην πολλάκις καὶ ὄνασθαί μου τῶν λόγων ηὐξάμην).

Psellos is, nonetheless, fond of the non-descript beast (θήρ), by which he characterizes Michael V Kalaphates for his treatment of Zoë (5.17.13), and the hostile Constantinopolitan mob surrounding Michael and his uncle John the Orphanotrophos prior to their blinding (5.41.2, 5.45.4). By the end of the reign of Michael VI Stratiotikos he claims that the most of the population had been changed from men to beasts (7.57.1–2: θῆρας τοὺς πλείους ἀντ᾽ ἀνθρώπων). Since on the other occasion (4.13.19) when Psellos uses the word θήρ in the sense of a fierce beast he couples it again with βλοσυρός, to describe the stern expression of John the Orphanotrophos, we may assume that he was there thinking of a lion. Just once he uses θήρ in a non-pejorative sense when comparing the state with a robust and healthy beast (6.48.1),[33] an image which he extends at inordinate length in a medical context.[34]

The only bird that provides imagery is the griffin, and that merely to describe the shape of Constantine X Doukas' nose (7c.12.14). Snakes (ὄφεις) are the sole other creature specified in simile or metaphor as they serve to describe Patzinaks "lurking in deep ravines and beetling cliffs" (7.68.35–36: καὶ ἐμφωλεύουσιν ὥσπερ ὄφεις φάραγξι βαθείαις καὶ κρημνοῖς ἀποτόμοις).

Rivers in the form of raging, destructive, torrents occur in Homeric similes (all in the *Iliad*),[35] while later authors commonly use the river also to emphasize quantity. Psellos is once Homeric in describing rivers dashing against Eudokia's tower of wise calculations to propel her into a second marriage (7b.5.4–5: οἱ ἐπιρρέοντες ποταμοὶ κλονοῦσιν αὐτῇ τὸν πύργον τῶν σωφρονικῶν λογισμῶν). Elsewhere he has rivers or springs of gold (seven times), money (twice), tears (twice), words (twice), blood and oil (7c.16.7: ῥεύματι ἐλαίου ἀψοφητὶ ῥέοντος), which last reminds him of the mild character of the Caesar John Doukas, brother of Constantine X. Occasionally one may think that this imagery, especially when reduced to a single noun or verb, is for Psellos a dead metaphor: for instance he simply uses the noun

[33] The population is likened also to a ζῷον (7.55.18).
[34] Below, pp. 35–38.
[35] See Keith (1914) 31; Scott (1974) 76–77.

κρουνός ("spring") to describe the abundance of Constantine X's joyful tears whenever our author expounded theological doctrine (7a.24.8); and the verb ἐπιρρέω ("keep on flowing") to describe a great crowd (6.19.6). Nevertheless, the fact that he is rarely satisfied with a single word of imagery proves that this is not the case. Thus when he describes his sudden onset of sorrow at the rough blinding of Michael V and his uncle, "an unquenchable flood of tears poured forth from my eyes as if some fount were welling up within" (5.40.13–15: ὥσπερ τινὸς ἔνδοθεν ἀναρρυείσης πηγῆς, δακρύων ῥοῦς ἀκατάσχετος προεχεῖτο τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν). Again when he claims, surely with Plato's *Protagoras* in mind, that of the two branches of literature, rhetoric and philosophy, the former is ignorant of more noble things for it "simply foams forth in a mighty torrent of words" (6.41.3–4: καχλάζει μόνον τῷ μεγάλῳ τῶν λέξεων ῥεύματι), his employment of the somewhat unusual verb καχλάζω[36] with the common noun ῥεῦμα[37] shows that he was fully conscious of what he was doing. Moreover, Psellos is never satisfied with describing a river, stream or fountain of the same thing in quite the same way. This love for varied elaboration of the imagery is worth presentation.

Whereas under Romanos III "rivers of money were" simply "channelled elsewhere" (3.12.19–20: ἐφ' ἕτερα οἱ τῶν χρημάτων μετωχετεύοντο ποταμοί), a few lines later the money collected for ecclesiastical construction was dissipated like water in rivers before ever it reached the sea (3.14.26–30: ὥσπερ δὲ τῶν εἰσβαλλόντων εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν ποταμῶν, πρὸ τῆς εἰς ταύτην συνεισβολῆς πλεῖστόν τι τῶν ἠπείρων ἄνω μετοχετεύεται, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τῶν ἐκεῖσε συναγομένων χρημάτων προηρπάζετο τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ διεφθείρετο). As for gold, whereas he has the Russians merely imagining that the Empire possessed springs of it (6.92.7–8: πηγάς . . . χρυσίτιδας) and Zoë squandering it as if she had a river (6.160.9–10: ποταμηδὸν χεῖσθαι ἐᾷ τὸν ἐν ἐκείνοις χρυσόν), Constantine Monomachos' squandering, on the Church of Saint George of Mangana, is expressed in terms of a "stream foaming forth from inexhaustible springs" (6.185.19–21: ὁ δὲ χρυσὸς ἀπὸ

[36] Psellos himself, however, uses it in a similar context at 6.185.20, and a further compound at 7.50.5. In the present passage he may have had in mind the description by Dionysios of Halikarnassos of "Plato's rich fount (of rhetoric) and great elaboration foaming forth" (*Dem.* 28: τὸ Πλατωνικὸν νᾶμα τὸ πλούσιον καὶ τὰς μεγάλας κατασκευὰς καχλάζον).

[37] This seems to be a favourite of Psellos, and, strikingly, no fewer than five of his images of water use this as the concluding word.

τῶν δημοσίων ταμιείων, ὥσπερ ἐξ ἀφθόνων πηγῶν καχλάζοντι ἐπέρρει τῷ ῥεύματι), while the surface of its vault, unlike the scattered stars of the real firmament, had, with unusually this time only unimaginative variation of wording, "gold issuing from its centre in an inexhaustible stream" (6.186.12–13: ὥσπερ ἐκ κέντρου ῥυεὶς ἀφθόνῳ τῷ ῥεῦματι). Zoë's spendthrift ways clearly irked him for in a second reference to them he imagines her in a single day draining a sea teeming with flakes of gold (6.4.14–15: οἵα θάλατταν αὐθημερὸν ἐξαντλῆσαι ψηγμάτων χρυσῶν περιπλήθουσαν); in a third Psellos piles up rivers, channels and streams (6.153.9–10: ἐπιρρεῖ τε αὐτῇ χρυσῷ ποταμοὺς ῥέοντας καὶ ὀχετοὺς ὀλβίους καὶ εὐδαιμονίας ἄπειρα ῥεύματα); and in a fourth he contrasts the sisters Theodora and Zoë by claiming that the former blocked off the golden stream, but the latter thoroughly cleaned out the channel to aid the flood" (6.64.24–26: ἡ μὲν τὸ χρυσοῦν ῥεῦμα ἐπισφραγίζοι, ἡ δὲ τὴν ὁδὸν διακαθαίροι τῷ ῥεύματι). On yet another occasion he has her "opening wide the mouths of the founts of the imperial treasuries" (6.7.6–7: τὰς πηγὰς . . . ἀναστομούσης τῶν βασιλικῶν θησαυρῶν).[38]

A desire to go beyond the simple metaphor is evident again in his musing that after the great naval battle of 1043 in which 15,000 Russian corpses were washed up on the shore of the Bosporos the reddened sea must have been fed by rivers (6.95.19–21: ὥσπερ ἐκ ποταμῶν ἄνωθεν ῥευμάτιον ὡς ἀληθῶς φόνιον τὴν θάλασσαν κατεφοίνισσεν). Different elaboration is evident in his second reference to a torrent of words, to describe the loquacity of Isaac Komnenos who in full flood (a verb this time) is compared with the "Nile rising up for the Egyptians and the Euphrates gushing forth for the Assyrians" (7.50.3–5: τοῖς λόγοις πλημμυρῶν ἢ ὁ Νεῖλος ἀναβαίνων τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις, καὶ τοῖς Ἀσσυρίοις ὁ Εὐφράτης ἐπικαχλάζων). Psellos puts this favoured imagery to another use in describing a barbarian who though once a slave had risen to the Senate and now conceived designs on the imperial throne: "but when he tasted sweet Roman springs he thought it amiss if he did not also make himself master of their source and rule over the most noble-born Romans, although

[38] The many instances of this metaphor encourage the belief that Psellos had in mind the etymological meaning of the verb ἀπαντλέω ("take out bilge water" and then more generally "draw water") when he employed it at 5.8.5 for withdrawing money from a treasury.

himself bought for silver" (6.136.6–9: ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδὴ τῶν παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις ποτίμων ναμάτων ἐγεύσατο, δεινὸν ἄλλως πεποίηται, εἰ μὴ καὶ τῆς πηγῆς ἐγκρατὴς γένοιτο, καὶ βασιλεύσοι τῶν εὐγενεστάτων Ῥωμαίων ὁ ἀργυρώνητος). Psellos' most famous instance of metaphorical springs occurs when in his auto-eulogizing description he asseverates that if he is to be praised it is because any wisdom that he has learned has come not from any flowing source but through his efforts at discovering, opening and cleansing the blocked founts of philosophy whose waters he has drawn up from great depths (6.42.13–17: . . . ὅτι μη ἐκ ῥεούσης πηγῆς εἴ τί μοι σοφίας μέρος συνείλεκται ἠρανισάμην, ἀλλ᾽ ἐμπεφραγμένας εὑρηκὼς ἀνεστόμωσά τε καὶ ἀνεκάθηρα, καὶ ἐν βάθει που τὸ ναμα κείμενον σὺν πολλῷ ἀνείλκυσα πνεύματι). This clearly delighted him much since he returns to it in the following chapter in his complaint that, since the (philosophical) streams of gold, silver and even baser metals had been completely blocked up, he was able to study not living sources but only their images (6.43.5–9: αἱ χρυσίτιδες φλέβες καὶ αἱ μετ᾽ ἐκείνας καὶ ἀργυρίτιδες, καὶ εἴ τινες ἄλλαι τῆς ἀτιμοτέρας τούτων ὕλης, ἐμπεφραγμέναι ξύμπασι πᾶσι τεθέανται· ὅθεν μὴ αὐτοῖς δὴ τοῖς ζῶσι νάμασιν ἐντυχεῖν ἔχων, ταῖς εἰκόσιν ἐκείνων προσεσχηκώς).[39] His own philosophy later becomes a liquid draught when he describes Constantine X "filling himself with as it were my nectar" (7a25.4: ἀναπιμπλάμενος ἐμοῦ ὥσπερ νέκταρος).

For the waters of destruction, except for the instance noted above,[40] Psellos has recourse to the waves of the sea, as, of course, did Homer:[41] indeed he was so enamoured of this imagery that he can use the words κλύδων (6.149.7) and κῦμα (7b.26.1) as simple unembroidered metaphors for trouble—the resolution of the problem of joint-rule by the family of Michael VII is described as "this wave was put to rest" (7b.26.1: τοῦτο κατευνάσθη τὸ κῦμα), and with little

[39] Has Psellos mixed metaphors here? The word φλέβες, that I translate by "streams", is more commonly "veins", and thus very apposite to metals; but, if he were consistent, then νάμασιν, properly referring to water, would have to be used figuratively. Moreover, φλέψ is used for a spring of water on a number of occasions in Classical Greek (first in Aristotle, *Pr.*935b10).

[40] P. 22.

[41] It is most frequently applied in the Homeric poems to some aspect of armies or warriors (see Keith (1914) 25–26, 42). For a thorough study of maritime imagery in early Greek poetry, and especially Pindar, see Péron (1974).

variation of wording a rebellion against Michael V is a mighty series of three waves which he promises will be put to rest (5.32.9: τρικυμίας κατευνασθείσης);[42] and the cognate verb κυμαίνω ("toss on the waves") is used to describe Constantine IX suffering from his grievous malady (6.131.3) and also from the hardly comparable thought that he might be deprived of Psellos' conversation (6.197.14), while the compound verb διακυμαίνω is used for his general problems (6.89.8). A slight extension occurs when Psellos observes of Michael V that he could not have cared less "if a single wave had seized and hidden from sight all [his relations]" (5.9.16–17: εἰ πάντας ἓν κῦμα ἐκάλυψε κατασχόν). More elaborately, in his relief when the head of the rebel George Maniakes' has been displayed impaled, Constantine IX is compared to "a man recovering his breath after escaping from a wave which was engulfing him" (6.86.7–8: καθαπερεί τινος καλύπτοντος ἀπαλλαγεὶς κύματος καὶ βραχύ τι ἐξαναπνεύσας); but the same emperor cannot escape waves of erotic desire (6.151.7–8: κύματα ἐπὶ ταῖς πρώταις εὐναῖς).[43] Indecision as to who should rule after the defeat at Mantzikert is a wave (7b.26.1), as are the many troubles from which Constantine Lichoudes rescued the state (7.66.2) and those that had rolled against the state in the time of Constantine IX (6.72.11), in which last the metaphor is achieved simply through use of a verb (διακυμαίνω). Once (7b.30.2–3) Psellos achieves his purpose by a simple use of an adjective—his aid renders affairs of state ἀξύγκλυστα ("not overwhelmed by the waters"), which nicely picks up the picture in the previous sentence of Michael VII recovering his breath after emerging from the billows the moment that he sees our author (7b.29.13–14: ὁ δὲ εὐθὺς ἰδὼν ἀναπνέει τοῦ κλύδωνος).

Psellos once uses the imagery for a general comment:[44] men have metaphorically dared every sea and every wind, some having been drowned by waves, others violently buffeted (7.66.10–13: ὅθεν πάσης μὲν θαλάττης κατατολμῶντες, πᾶσι δὲ ἀντιβαίνοντες πνεύμασιν, οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν ἔδυσαν ἁρπασθέντες τοῖς κύμασιν, οἱ δὲ ἀπέστησαν

[42] The figurative use of this verb with the sea appears to occur first at Apollonius Rhodius, 1.1155. Psellos uses it again at 7b.26.1.

[43] A few lines later the waves became "the flame of love" (6.152.3: τὴν φλόγα τοῦ ἔρωτος) for an Alan princess.

[44] This comes a few lines after his claim that Constantine Lichoudes had rescued the state from many waves.

βιαιότερον). Otherwise he reserves it for a specific instance, as in one remarkable, but typically Psellan, extension of the theme when, during Constantine Monomachos' illness, the emperor's basic humors "deluging his very muscles and the bones of his back, shook him violently like currents converging upon an initially sturdy merchant ship" (6.127.6–12: αὐτίκα γοῦν αἱ τοῦ σώματος ἀρχαί, λέγω δὲ τὰς στοιχειώδεις συστάσεις . . . αὖθις δὲ αὐτούς τε τοὺς τένοντας καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν νῶτον ὀστᾶ κατακλύζουσαι, ὥσπερ τινὰ φορτίδα ἰσχυρῶς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἔχουσαν ῥεύματα ξυνερρυηκότα διέσεισαν). A less destructive image of waves, although Psellos hardly approves of their effect, comes in his description of Zoë, whose passions remind him of "waves that lift the ship on high and again plunge it down" (6.4.9–11: καὶ ἐῴκει κατὰ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος κύμασι θαλαττίοις καὶ ἀπαιωροῦσι τὴν ναῦν καὶ αὖθις βαπτίζουσιν); which marine imagery the rhetorician in him makes him pick up a few words later in characterizing her generosity, as we have seen, as capable of exhausting a sea of gold-dust in a single day.[45]

The contrast between raging storms and brief periods of calm of the sea occurs twice. In the first instance Psellos, in showing his sympathy for Constantine IX, sadly remarks that for an emperor "not even the briefest portion of his private life lacks troubles; but as a sea is briefly flat and calm so on other occasions it rises high and is also lashed by its billows as now Boreas or Aparktias[46] or some other of the winds that stir the waves[47] throws it into confusion, a thing that I have repeatedly seen myself" (6.27.18–23: μηδὲ τὸ βραχύτατον μέρος τῆς οἰκείας ζωῆς τῶν ὀχλούντων ἐστέρηται . . . ἀλλ' ὥσπερ θάλασσα βραχὺ μὲν κατεστόρεσται καὶ γαληνιᾷ, τὰ δ' ἄλλα τοῦτο μὲν πλημμυρεῖ, τοῦτο δὲ καὶ τινάσσεται κύμασι, νῦν μὲν βορέου διαταράττοντος, νῦν δ' ἀπαρκτίου, νῦν δ' ἄλλου τινὸς ἐγειρόντων κλυδώνιον, ὅπερ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ πολλοῖς ἑωράκειν). The second instance involves the striking comparison with Isaac I's relaxation of facial muscles after intense mental concentration "as if they had come from the deep to a calm anchorage" (7.24.11–12: ὥσπερ ἐκ βυθοῦ εἰς γαλήνην προσορμιζόμενα).

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[45] Above, p. 24.

[46] His desire for variation even leads him here to use two different names for a north wind.

[47] Psellos doubtless uses κλυδώνιον here since he has just had κύματα; which is legitimate in this context since the former noun had long since lost its diminutive sense.

That calm anchorage could, of course, be a harbor, a metaphor for a refuge from dangers especially favored by Psellos,[48] and which he uses even for his own retreat to the safety of a monastery when in 1054 "I put in at the Church's harbors" (6.199.2: ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐκκλησίας κατῆρα λιμένας). He makes Constantine IX Monomachos "consider that he had reached the harbors of the palace from the numerous waves and rough water, I mean the tribulations of his exile" (6.34.1–3: ἐδόκει γὰρ ἐκ κυμάτων πολλῶν καὶ κλύδωνος, φημὶ δὴ τῶν ἐν τῇ ὑπερορίᾳ δεινῶν, εἰς τοὺς λιμένας τῶν βασιλείων κατᾶραι); which idea he repeats in similar words by claiming that Constantine's accession "indicated an opportunity for taking breath again, like a man who has just reached the imperial harbors from the vast sea" (6.178.2–3: ὡς ἐκ μακροῦ τοῦ πελάγους εἰς τοὺς βασιλείους λιμένας κατάρας, ἀναπνευστέα[49] τε αὐτῷ ἐδόκει). For this reason the new emperor handed over effective power to Constantine Lichoudes and "himself breathed peaceably, having recently escaped from the sea and still spitting out the brine of his mishaps" (6.179. 2–3: αὐτός τε ἠρέμα πως ἀπέπνει,[50] ἄρτι τοῦ πελάγους ὑπεκδὺς καὶ ἀποπτύων τὴν ἅλμην τῶν συμφόρων). Psellos varies the imagery a little when indicating the continuation of this dereliction of imperial duties for he says that Monomachos enjoyed himself "as if he had sailed to harbor[51] for this purpose, so as not to undergo any more the toils of helmsmanship" (6.47.6–7: ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τούτῳ καταπλεύσας ἵνα μηκέτι τὰ τῆς κυβερνήσεως ἐνεργοίη). He was well aware of his addiction to the imagery, as he admits on another occasion when he applies it to the emperor's love not for leisure but for peace: "As I have indeed often said, this man wished not to put out to sea again after he had brought his ship to anchor from the rough water to shores that bring no grief and sheltered harbors of imperial power: that is he wished to reign at peace, not war" (6.72.1–5: ἐβούλετο μὲν οὖν οὗτος, ὥσπερ δὴ πολλάκις μοι εἴρηται, ἐκ πολλοῦ κλύδωνος εἰς ἀλύπους ἀκτὰς καὶ λιμένας ἀκλύστους τῆς βασιλείας καθορμισάμενος, μὴ πάλιν

[48] It is first found metaphorically in Theognis, but in very different contexts—a bad man should always be avoided "like a bad harbour" (114), but a young wife of an aged husband "breaks her moorings and often finds another harbour at nights" (459–460).

[49] Renauld reads ἀναπνευστέα, Impellizzeri ἐναπνευστέα.

[50] So read the texts, but did Psellos write ἀνέπνει? A scribe, copying orally, could have been influenced by the following ἀποπτύων.

[51] There is no word here for harbour, but the compound verb καταπλέω implies it.

ἀφεῖναι πρὸς πελάγος· τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν εἰρηνικῶς, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ πολεμικῶς τὴν ἀρχὴν διεξάγειν). Yet again in the same book, but this time for the emperor's wife and only partly metaphorically, and again with variety of wording, Psellos draws from the same source when Theodora, not being cognizant with Constantine's plans for a successor, took ship and, "as if from the billows swam to the halls of the palace" (6.202.7–8: ὥσπερ ἐκ κυμάτων εἰς τὰς τῶν ἀνακτόρων αὐλὰς ἀνανήχεται).

Clearly attracted by the spitting out of brine, Psellos combines this with that of the harbor for Isaac's busy first day, when this rather more energetic emperor has the variations of swimming (like Theodora) rather than sailing to harbor and not yet having had the time to spit out the sea-water or recover his breath before involving himself in military matters (7.44.6–9: καὶ ὥσπερ ἐκ πελάγους καὶ χειμῶνος πολλοῦ ἀγαπητῶς ἅμα καὶ αἰσίως εἰς λιμένας ἀπονηξάμενος, πρὸ τοῦ τὴν θαλαττίαν ἀποπτύσαι ἅλμην καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα συλλέξασθαι). This is again a splendid example of the Byzantine, and Psellan, love for variation that is yet perfectly fitted to the demands of the situation being described. That appropriateness can be illustrated once more, if this time not quite as happily, in a similar passage about Isaac's haste in annulling his predecessor's enactments: "His policy would have been marvellous if, like someone who has swum ashore out of a sea, he had taken a little breath; but, not knowing how to anchor or come into port[52] for a short while, he had once more essayed a sea and again a third and after that a greater and extremely dreadful one, as if he were not stirring up the waves[53] of politics but scouring away Augeas' dung" (7.61.4–9: καὶ ἔδοξεν ἂν τὸ πρᾶγμα θαυμάσιον, εἰ ὥσπερ ἐκ πελάγους ἀνανήξας βραχύ τι ἀνέπνευσεν· ἀλλ᾽ οὗτος οὐκ εἰδὼς προσορμίζεσθαι, οὐδὲ μικρόν τι ἐλλιμενίζειν, ἕτερον αὖθις ἐθάρρησε πέλαγος, καὶ πάλιν ἄλλο, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο μεῖζον καὶ φρικωδέστατον, ὥσπερ οὐ πολιτικὰς πράξεις διακυμαίνων, ἀλλὰ τὴν Αὐγέου κόπρον ἀνακαθαίρων). Finally, while for our more intellectual author the philosopher Proklos is the harbor at which he puts in (6.38.4: ὡς ἐπὶ λιμένα μέγιστον κατασχών), Psellos claims that he was himself able to aid Constantine X because

[52] The verbs show that Psellos has allowed Isaac the swimmer to be transmogrified into a sailor.

[53] Again the metaphor is achieved in Greek through a verb rather than, as English prefers, a noun.

he was sufficiently skilled a mariner "that when waves of trouble were buffeting him [Constantine], I myself, having taken hold of the tiller and now slackening off and now tightening again, brought him with precision into the imperial harbor" (7.91.6–9: ὅτι τῶν πραγαὐτῷ ἤδη κυμαινόντων αὐτῷ, αὐτὸς τῶν οἰάκων ἐπιλαβόμενος, καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐνδιδούς, τὰ δὲ ἀντιτείνων, ἀκριβῶς εἰς τοὺς βασιλείους λιμένας κατήνεγκα).

Before leaving matters maritime, which certainly appealed to Psellos since he compared his undertaking of the *Chronographia* to a daring voyage over a "mighty ocean in a tiny skiff" (5.24.18–19: ἐπὶ μικρᾶς σχεδίας μέγα περαιώσασθαι τετόλμηκα πέλαγος), we may note that the ship of state, an image that first appears already full-sailed in Alcaeus,[54] is obviously present in Psellos' "helm of government" (2.1.5: τῆς ἡγεμονίας . . . τοὺς οἴακας) and when for the civilian rather than military governance of Basil II he says that the emperor "steered the state" (1.29.9–11: τὸ δὲ πολιτικόν . . . ἐκυβέρνα). It appears more elaborately for the policies of Michael VII: "When waves were washing over his affairs in both east and west . . . another man . . . would have given in to the circumstances. What would then have happened? The cable of the Empire would have been shattered, the roof rent asunder and the foundations torn up.[55] But Michael's steadfast spirit and unshaken judgement brought the movement of affairs to a halt, and, if we have not up to this time run our ship into harbor, yet we are not tossing on the deep and have not hitherto been forced back out to sea" (7c.7.8–17: ξυγκλυσθέντων αὐτῷ τῶν πραγμάτων κατά τε τὴν ἑῴαν καὶ τὴν ἑσπέραν . . . ἄλλος μὲν ἄν τις . . . ἐνεδεδώκει τοῖς πραγμάσιν· εἶτα τί . . . διερράγη ἂν ὁ τῆς βασιλείας κάλως, καὶ κατερράγη μὲν ἡ ὀροφή, ἀνέπαστο δὲ ὁ θεμέλιος· ἀλλ' ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῷ στάσις καὶ τὸ τῆς γνώμης ἀκλόνητον ἔστησε τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων φοράν, καὶ εἰ μὴ τοῖς λιμέσι προσωκείλαμεν τέως, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μετέωρου σαλεύομεν καὶ οὔπω ἀπώσθημεν ἐς τὸ πέλαγος).

A simpler, but more effective, treatment of the theme occurs upon the accession of Constantine IX, for he "took over the state as if it

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[54] E.g. fr. 208 (Lobel/Page). For an interesting examination of this imagery see Péron (1974) 101–143.

[55] I think that this is a mixed metaphor (unless ὀροφή and θεμέλιος could refer respectively to cover [deck ?] and keel of a ship, but Psellos does use the image of a building for the Empire elsewhere [see below, p. 41]).

were a merchantman laden right to the final safety-line so that it breasted the onrush of the waves by only a tiny margin; but then, piling even more on, he sank it" (7.55.6–9: ὅς δὴ ὥσπερ τινὰ φορτίδα ναῦν τὴν πολιτείαν καταλαβὼν ἄχρι τοῦ τελευταίου ζωστῆρος τὸν φόρτον ἔχουσαν, ὡς βραχύ τι ὑπερκεῖσθαι τῆς τῶν κυμάτων ἐπιρροῆς, ὑπερχειλῆ πεποιηκὼς κατεβάπτισεν). Even more simply, when Michael VII handed over the making of decisions to Psellos, "he, as it were, breathed again (having escaped) the billows" (7b.29.13–14: ὥσπερ ἀναπνέει τοῦ κλύδωνος), and "the affairs of the city were no longer overwhelmed by waves" (7b.30.2–3: ἀξύγκλυστα γένοιτο τὰ τῆς Πόλεως πράγματα). The imagery was extended also to the fortunes of a private individual, as when through his policies John the Orphanotrophos' "ship sank with all hands" (4.20.7: αὔτανδρον αὐτοῖς τὸ σκάφος κατέδυ); and to the army, which, with Isaac Komnenos as emperor and Constantine Doukas as Caesar "was, as it were, moored by two anchors" (7.88.9–10: τὸ ξύμπαν στράτευμα ἐπὶ δυοῖν ὥσπερ ἀγκύραιν ὥρμει).

We have been blown somewhat off course from our investigation of storms. Although preferring those at sea, Psellos also mentions storms, especially thunder and lightning, without designating place.

Winds alone rarely figure, but he has one very Homeric simile, which is even introduced by οἷα, although, oddly, the wording is closer to a passage in the Epistle of Saint James (3.4), when he likens the rebel Bardas Phokas to "a cloud driven along by furious winds" (1.16.6: νέφος ἀνέμοις σφοδροῖς ἐλαυνόμενον). In a simile again introduced by οἷον Maniakes is compared with a πρηστήρ (6.77.6), the stormy wind that accompanies lightning. Elsewhere we find that the pretender Leo Tornikios "ran like the wind" (6.107.1–2: πνεύματος δίκην διαδραμών); that Romanos Argyros' "spirit of such generous benefactions quickly deserted him and the gust quickly exhausted itself altogether"[56] (3.6.5–6: ταχὺ τοῦτον τὸ πνεῦμα τῶν τοιούτων ἐπέλιπεν ἐπιδόσεων, καὶ ἀθρόον πνεῦσαν ταχὺ διέπνευσε); that rebels had "gusts of anger" (5.32.14: τὰ τοῦ θυμοῦ πνεύματα), and that Psellos himself once "stood speechless as if struck by a whirlwind" (5.40.9: ὥσπερ δὲ τυφῶνι βληθεὶς αὖος εἱστήκειν).

As for rain, it could presage future troubles: "the gathering of clouds at that time prepared for the mighty deluge of to-day" (6.9.7–8:

[56] Although the text may be corrupt, the general sense is clear.

ἡ τηνικαῦτα τῶν νεφῶν συνδρομὴ τὸν μέγαν νῦν προκατεσκεύακεν ὑετόν). Far more arresting, however, is a metaphor of Isaac I's quietly effective eloquence: the emperor's "tongue with gentle drizzle rather than drenching rain both made receptive nature wax fat, and as it softly sank deep awakened an understanding of what had been left unexpressed" (7.48.8–11: κἀκείνῳ ἡ γλῶττα ψεκάζουσα, οὐχ ὑετίζουσα, ἐπίαινέ τε τὴν δεκτικὴν φύσιν καὶ ἠρέμα τὸ βάθος εἰσδῦσα πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σιωπηθέντος ἀνεκίνει ἐπίγνωσιν), in which the words φύσις and βάθος appear at first to apply to the inanimate, but which the last few words show are equally applicable to the animate.

Thunder alone is used, by means of a verb, to describe loud noises, the voice of Maniakes (6.77.6 after he himelf is likened to a πρηστήρ), and the shouts of an army (7.23.12). Except on one occasion when καταστράπτω ("flash lightning") is the verb in a passage (3.19.9) indicating the increased brilliant appearance in the eyes of Zoë caused by her prospective lover's modest demeanor, lightning, with or without mention of thunder, is used to show speed and destructive force. Thus John the Orphanotrophos scoured Constantinople at night like lightning (4.12.26: ἀστραπῆς δίκην) to surprise unsuspecting citizens; and Romanos Argyros' ignorance of the affair of Zoë and her paramour was "a cloud of ophthalmia" (3.21.2: νέφος ὀφθαλμίας), but then "the bolt of lightning and mighty clap of thunder both illuminated the pupils of his eyes and thundered down on his ears" (3.2.3–5: ἡ τῆς ἀστραπῆς ἔκπληξις καὶ τὸ μέγεθος τῆς βροντῆς καὶ τὰς ἐκείνου περιηύγασε κόρας καὶ τὴν ἀκοὴν κατεβρόντησεν), although thereat he figuratively covered up both eyes and ears. Isaac's silence, on the other hand, struck members of the senate dumb and transfixed (literally "froze") them as if they had been hit by lightning (7.47.6); and he had a similar effect in battle on his enemies, who regarded him as "wielder of the thunderbolt" (7.70.7: κεραυνοφόρος). One may presume that Psellos himself felt the same sort of piercing fierceness in Isaac's expression, because he claims that when the emperor was concentrating on some purpose "his eyes flashed lightning and his brow was, so to speak, like a cloud lying over the starry radiance of his soul" (7.46.21–22: οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἤστραπτον, καὶ ἡ ὀφρύς, οἷα δή τι νέφος τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς φωστῆρι, ἵν' οὕτως εἴπω, ἐπέκειτο).

This last image clearly appealed to Psellos. Constantine Monomachos' degenerative illness dimmed his natural beauty, like a sun obscured by clouds (6.124.5: οἷα δή τις ἥλιος νέφεσι καλυφθείς), although in

his youth "his head had in beauty rivalled the sun,[57] shining with its hair like rays" (7.126.16–17: κάλλεσι μὲν ἂν ἡλίου τὴν κεφαλὴν εἴκασεν, οἷα δή τισιν ἀκτῖσι ταῖς θριξὶ διαλάμπουσαν). Constantine Doukas, in keeping a low profile before his accession, "so that he should not be judged for his brilliance hid, like a sun, behind his own cloud" (7.85.8–9: ἵνα μηδὲ κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν αὐγὴν νομίζοιτο, ὥσπερ τις ἥλιος νέφος ἑαυτοῦ προέβαλλετο), where the use of the word αὐγή ("brilliance"), with its primary meaning of solar light, nicely prepares the reader for mention of the celestial body. Psellos can use the simile also the other way round, for he likened Isaac's forces roaming round the city to "many clouds in the sky" and the emperor, in dispersing them, to "the sun having suddenly shone and in a moment scattered the mist" (7.45.15–17: εἴκασα τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐγὼ νέφεσι πολλοῖς αἰθερίοις, καὶ ἡλίῳ ἀθροώτερον λάμψαντι καὶ τὴν ἀχλὺν αὐτίκα σκεδάσαντι). The Russian ships in the Propontis in 1043 were, on the other hand, "a thick cloud rising from the sea which filled the City with mist" (6.90.5–6: νέφος ἀθρόον ἀπὸ θαλάσσης ἀρθὲν ἀχλύος τὴν Βασιλίδα πληροῖ); while, applying the metaphor in a completely different context, Psellos describes one type of soul as "all cloudy and trailing a thick mist" (6.44.13–14: ἡ δὲ συννεφὴς καὶ πολλήν τινα τὴν ἀχλὺν ἐπισύρουσα). Finally for meteorological imagery, clouds are used in a very different sense as standing for the sky and thus representing something bright and good in a message to Constantine IX from Tornikios, who claims that the emperor "has brought [the hopes of the City] down from the clouds to the most extreme precipice" (6.117.25–26: εἰς τοὔσχατον ἐκ τῶν νεφῶν ἀφῆκεν ἐπὶ κρημνόν).

The imagery of fire seems to have held little attraction for Psellos. Since he does not embroider any instance and many consist simply of the use of a verb of burning, we may perhaps conclude that it was mainly a dead metaphor (interestingly in both Homer and Hesiod a larger percentage of fire similes are very brief than of those of other themes). In Psellos the glances of the mob's eyes were "fiery" (5.28.5: πυρώδεις), hate "smouldered" (5.9.31: ὑπετύφετο), war "was kindled" (5.33.1: ἐξήφθη), a breast "burned" (6.145.14: ἐπυρπολεῖτο) with love (which, of course was considered in Greek literature as a

[57] By use of a verb he reverts to this comparison between sun and imperial head a few lines later (6.126.11: τὴν μὲν κεφαλὴν ἡλιῶσαν ἀπέδειξε καὶ πυρσήν).

feverish disease), Maniakes "is set on fire with rage" (6.81.11: διαπυροῦται τῷ θυμῷ), someone could "quench the burning rage" of Constantine VIII (2.2.32–33: τις αὐτῷ φλεγμαίνοντα κατέσβεσε τὸν θυμόν), and Psellos "rekindled philosophy which had expired" (6.37.5–6: ἐκπνεύσασαν τὴν σοφίαν . . . ἀνεζωπύρησα). The other examples are a little more interesting and extended. Dare-devils "added their own evil as further fuel to the emperor's conflagration" (3.12.15–16: ὕλην πλείονα τὴν ἑαυτῶν κακίαν τῇ τοῦ κρατοῦντος ὑπετίθουν πυρκαϊᾷ). He boasts that he realized that "the spark [of a rebellion against Michael Kalaphates] had been kindled into a conflagration and that it would need many rivers and a fast-flowing current to be quenched" (5.27.15–17: εἰς πυρκαϊὰν ὁ σπινθὴρ ἀνεφλέχθη καὶ δεῖ πολλῶν ποταμῶν καὶ ἐπιφόρου τοῦ ῥεύματος ὥστε ἀποσβεσθῆναι). Three times he applies different relevant contexts for the traditional metaphor of sparks or fire beneath ashes in using it for Michael the Paphlagonian's ability to hide his evil disposition beneath the cloak of goodwill (4.28.7–8: πῦρ μὲν ὑπὸ σποδιᾷ κρύψαι); Basil II's ability to store up and hide his wrath (1.34.4–5: τὰς ὀργὰς ταμιεύων καὶ ὥσπερ ὑπὸ σποδιᾷ κρύπτων), which, however, he rekindled (ἀνῆπτε) if his orders were disobeyed; and also for Romanos III's attempt to revive moribund learning when "if there were any sparks of wisdom concealed under the ash" (3.2.13–14: εἴ που σπινθῆρές τινες σοφίας ὑπὸ σποδιᾷ παρεκρύπτοντο), he collected a host of philosophers and orators, the choice for which of the verb ἀναχώννυμι nicely suggesting a picture of the emperor piling more fuel onto the smouldering fire. Finally, Psellos claims that when he observed Constantine Monomachos growing weary of his instruction in rhetoric he would pretend that "his own heat had been quenched by the superiority of its quality" (6.197.45–46: σβεσθείσης μοι τῆς θερμότητος τῷ ὑπερβάλλοντι τῆς ποιότητος), as had happened to the famous rhetorician Hermogenes (who had burned himself out by the age of 25).[58]

Medicine held a fascination for Psellos: he wrote various treatises on different aspects of the subject, not all published, and even a lengthy poem of 1374 lines, his second, and second only marginally,

[58] The letter of Michael VII to Phokas (Nikephoros Botaneiates) quoted by Psellos in the *Chronographia* contains two further linked figurative references: in the context of his misguided policies of appeasement the emperor's hoped-for "treasure has turned to charcoal" since it is impossible "to quench fire with oil" (7c.18.35–38: ἄνθρακες ὁ θησαυρος . . . ἐλαίῳ πῦρ κατασβέσαι).

largest.[59] If we, then, expect medical imagery from him in other works, we shall not be disappointed. Some of these may have been almost dead metaphors for him, such as, at the stirring of Bardas Skleros' first revolt against Basil II, the use of the obstetrical word ὠδίνες (1.10.6) for the coming travails and, for his second revolt, of the cognate verb ὠδίνω (1.24.5); and the calling of failure to take advice as "the incurable disease of monarchs" (7b.14.4–5: τὸ τῶν βασιλέων ἀνίατον νόσημα).

Others, however, are obviously deliberate. Taking the traditional simile first found in his beloved Plato of disguising nasty-tasting medicine for the sick,[60] he applies it, presumably with some contumely, for Constantine Monomachos, whose distaste for serious advice made it necessary for a counselor to leaven the weighty with the trivial, "as if he were offering someone with poor digestion a purgative mixed with spices" (6.33.14–15: ὥσπερ τινὶ κακοσίτῳ ἡδύσμασί τισι καταμεμιγμένον τὸ καθάρσιον πόμα ἐπώρεγεν). The army he terms the sinews (νεῦρα) of the Romans (4.19.20), which may be considered a semi-animate metaphor since it is governed by the not completely appropriate verb συγκροτέω ("weld")[61] were it not for two passages, the second immensely long, in which the state takes on animal form.

In the first he compares the Empire to "a sturdy and healthy animal which is not immediately altered by the initial stages of illnesses to come. So under him [Constantine IX], as the Empire was in no way desirous to die but still breathed and had its strength, its neglect appeared trivial until slowly the evil, having grown and peaked, ruined and confounded everything." (6.48.1–6: ἐρρωμένον ζῷον καὶ τοῖς πᾶσιν ἰσχυρῶς ἔχον οὐκ ἀλλοιοῦσιν αἱ τῶν μελλόντων παθημάτων ἀρχαί, οὕτω καὶ τούτῳ, οὐ πάνυ τι δυσθανατούσης τῆς βασιλείας, ἀλλ' ἔτι πνεῦμα καὶ τόνον ἐχούσης, βραχύ τι τὸ κατολιγωρεῖν διεφαίνετο, ἕως ἂν κατὰ βραχὺ τὸ κακὸν αὐξηθὲν καὶ κορυφωθὲν τὸ πᾶν ἀνέτρεψε καὶ συνέχεεν). But the pleasure-loving emperor "was in fact storing up many causes to generate sickness for the at that time healthy body of the Empire" (6.48.8–10: πολλὰ δὴ νοσοποιὰ αἴτια τῷ τότε ὑγιεῖ τῆς βασιλείας προκατεβάλετο σώματι).

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[59] *Poem.* 9.

[60] *Leges* 659e–660a.

[61] This verb is, however, applied to military forces (and Psellos does have στρατόν in apposition with νεῦρα) in, e.g., Aristides (2.157J), whom Byzantine authors knew well.

In the second Psellos claims that if Isaac had proceeded more slowly "he would have effected a purification also in political matters, which were in sorry condition, by first reducing the grossly fat evil and thus applying his remedy, . . . and the body politic would not have been thrown into utter confusion" (7.51.5–9: κἀν τοῖς πολιτικοῖς πράγμασι πονήρως ἔχουσιν ἐποιεῖτο τὴν κάθαρσιν, λεπτύνων πρότερον τὴν παχυνθεῖσαν κακίαν καὶ οὕτως ἐπάγων τὸ φάρμακον, . . . καὶ τὸ πολιτικὸν οὐκ ἂν διασέσειστο σῶμα). To show Isaac's desire of revolutionizing everything, Psellos briefly resorts to his metaphor of cutting out dead wood[62] before returning to a description of the Empire as "a body full of every marvel, divided into many heads, with stiff and thick neck, and formed with hands not easy to count and enjoying the same number of feet, then with inwards festering and malignant, in some parts swollen in others wasting away, this part dropsical, that decaying from consumption. He [Isaac] tried to cut everything out at once, to remove the excess, to bring back its proper proportions, to reduce parts and augment others, to heal the internal organs and breathe into it some life-giving breath" (7.51.11–20: σῶμα τερατείας πάσης μεστόν, κεφαλαῖς μὲν διαμεμερισμένον πολλαῖς, δυστράχηλον δὲ καὶ πολυτράχηλον, χερσί τε οὐκ εὐαριθμήτοις διαπεπλασμένον, καὶ ποσὶν ἰσαρίθμοις χρώμενον, εἶτα δὴ τὰ ἔνδον ὕπουλον καὶ κακόηθες, καὶ τὰ μὲν διεξῳδηκός, τὰ δὲ φθίνον, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ὑδεριοῦν, τοῦτο δὲ φθινάδι νόσῳ διαρρυέν, ἐπιχειρήσας ἀποτεμεῖν ἀθρόον, καὶ ὑπεξελεῖν μὲν τὰς περιττότητας, ἐπαγαγεῖν δὲ τὰς ἰσότητας, καὶ τὰ μὲν καθελεῖν, τὰ δ' ἐπαυξῆσαι, τά τε σπλάγχνα ἰάσασθαι, ἐμπνεῦσαί τε τούτῳ πνεῦμα φυσίζῳον).

Our historian deems it necessary at this point to devote the next few chapters to a history of the state from the time of Basil II; and he repeatedly returns to his medical imagery. Constantine VIII "first began to injure and swell out the body politic[63] by fattening some of his subjects with wealth and distending others with honours, thus rendering their life corrupt and purulent" (7.53.1–3: οὗτος μὲν δὴ πρώτως τὸ σῶμα τῆς πολιτείας κακοῦν τε καὶ ἐχογκοῦν ἤρξατο, τὰ μὲν ἐνίους τῶν ὑπηκόων χρήμασι καταπιάνας πολλοῖς, τὰ δὲ

[62] Above, p. 20.

[63] This common expression, which we have just seen in the form τὸ πολιτικὸν σῶμα occurs again, but with the order of words altered, at 3.15.11.

ἀξιώμασι διογκώσας, καὶ ὕπουλον αὐτοῖς καὶ διεφθαρμένην τὴν ζωὴν καταστήσας). This was a policy continued by Romanos Argyros, who thus exacerbated the situation since "he added to the already excessive bulk of the body, aggravated the disease and filled the corrupt part with superfluous fat" (7.53.11–13: προστίθησι τῷ περιττεύσαντι σώματι, καὶ αὐξάνει τὴν νόσον, καὶ τὸ διαφθειρόμενον καταπληροῖ ἐκκεχυμένης πιότητος). Even the niggardly Michael IV, although "he checked most of the disease-producing factors, could not muster the daring not to fatten a little the body accustomed to being nourished on unwholesome liquids and swelled by unhealthy foods . . . and it was not possible that his subjects would not burst one day since they had been fattened to the limit of good condition" (7.54.2–12: τὸ μὲν πολὺ τῶν νοσοποιῶν ὁ ἀνὴρ οὗτος ἐπέσχεν, οὐ μέντοι γε τοσοῦτον ἐξίσχυσεν ὥστε τολμῆσαι μηδὲ τὸ βραχύτατον ἐκλιπᾶναι τὸ εἰωθὸς σῶμα χυμοῖς ἐκτρεφέσθαι πονηροῖς καὶ διεφθαρμέναις ἐξογκοῦσθαι τροφαῖς . . . οὐκ ἦν δὲ ἄρα μὴ διαρραγήσεσθαί ποτε τούτους εἰς ἄκρον εὐεξίας ἐκπιανθέντας). Psellos first uses the image of an over-loaded ship, as we have seen,[64] for describing the actions of Constantine Monomachos, but then, consciously[65] reverting to his medical similes, continues: "having added very many parts and limbs to the previously rotting body, and introducing more unwholesome liquids to its internal parts, he removed it from its natural state and deprived it of its quiet social life. He all but drove it mad and turned it into a wild beast, making most of those under his own hand many-headed and hundred-handed" (7.55.11–16: πλεῖστα περιθεὶς μέρη καὶ μέλη τῷ πάλαι διαφθαρέντι σώματι, καὶ χυμοὺς πονηροτέρους τοῖς σπλάγχνοις εἰσενεγκών, τοῦ μὲν κατὰ φύσιν ἀπήνεγκε, καὶ τῆς ἡμέρου καὶ πολιτικῆς ζωῆς ἀπεστέρησεν, ἐξέμηνε δὲ μικροῦ δεῖν καὶ ἀπεθηρίωσε, πολυκεφάλους καὶ ἑκατόγχειρας τοὺς πλείους τῶν ὑπὸ χεῖρα πεποιηκώς). Theodora "appears not to have completely made this novel creature wild, but she too imperceptibly added both some hands and some feet" (7.55.17–19: ἔδοξε μὲν μὴ πάνυ τι ἀποθηριῶσαι τὸ καινὸν τουτὶ ζῷον, ἀλλ᾽ οὖν καὶ αὐτὴ λεληθότως καὶ χεῖράς τινας καὶ πόδας τούτῳ προσέθετο).

Slipping from his image of a single body politic to its component parts, Psellos tells us that the brief reign of Michael VI Stratiotikos

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[64] Above, pp. 30–31.
[65] 55.9–11: ἵνα . . . πρὸς τὴν προτέραν ἐπανέλθω τροπήν.

"had turned most people from men into beasts and fattened them up so much that many purgatives were necessary. Thus a change of procedure was called for, I mean surgery, cauterization and purgation" (7.57.1–5: ὁ . . . πρῶτος καιρὸς οὗτος θῆρας τοὺς πλείους ἀντ᾽ ἀνθρώπων πεποιηκὼς καὶ τοσοῦτον ὑπερπιάνας, ὡς δεῖσθαι φαρμάκων καθαρσίων πολλῶν, τὴν ἑτέραν ἐζήτει διαδοχήν, φημὶ δὴ τῆς τομῆς καὶ τοῦ καυτῆρος καὶ τῆς καθάρσεως). Isaac, "being a lover of the life of a philosopher and turning away from every diseased and corrupt aspect of existence, but coming upon the opposite and finding everything diseased and festering, . . . although he ought in that case to have waited for the right moment for surgery and cauterization and not immediately applied the heated iron to the internal organs, . . . yet, wishing the unnatural body returned to natural life, he somehow failed to notice, as he burned and cut . . . that he himself had been corrupted before he could put in order and restore those things" (7.58.1–17: ἦν δὲ οὗτος βίου μὲν ἐραστὴς φιλοσόφου, καὶ τὸ νοσοῦν ἅπαν καὶ διεφθαρμένον ἀποστρεφόμενος τῆς ζωῆς, τοῖς ἐναντίοις δὲ περιτυχὼν καὶ νοσοῦντα πάντα καὶ ὕπουλα εὑρηκώς, . . . δέον ἐκείνως μὲν τὸν καιρὸν ἀναμεῖναι καὶ τῆς τομῆς καὶ τῆς καύσεως καὶ μὴ εὐθὺς πεπυρακτωμένον τὸν σίδηρον ἐπιθεῖναι τοῖς σπλάγχνοις, . . . βουλόμενος . . . τὴν φυσικὴν ζωὴν τὸ παρὰ φύσιν γεγενημένον σῶμα μετενεχθῆναι, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν καίων καὶ τέμνων . . . ἔλαθέ πως διαφθαρεὶς πρότερον ἢ ἐκεῖνα τάξας καὶ καταστήσας).

The imperial surgeon rashly treating his patient[66] has now become chaotically confused with an imperial charioteer,[67] as Psellos ingenuously admits: "Isaac Komnenos mounted the Roman chariot[68] with his crown, and in order that we may look at him through the operation of allegories, let us now make him a charioteer, and now count him among the disciples of Asklepios" (7.57.5–9: ὁ Κομνηνὸς᾽ Ισαάκιος ἐπὶ τὸν Ῥωμαϊκὸν ἄνεισι μετὰ τοῦ διαδήματος ἄξονα, καὶ ἵνα δὴ καὶ τοῦτον τῇ διὰ τῶν ἀλληγοριῶν ἐναργείᾳ κατανοήσωμεν, νῦν μὲν εἰς ἡνίοχον θείημεν, νῦν δὲ τοῖς᾽ Ασκληπιάδαις καταριθμήσωμεν).

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[66] There is one final, fleeting, reference to the imperial surgeon when Psellos decries the fact that he did not "after the amputation draw breath before tackling another" (7.62.3–4: μετὰ τὴν τομὴν ἀναπνέων ἑτέρῳ πάλιν ἐπεχείρει).

[67] There are no fewer than six changes of imagery in the 20 lines (indeed within 13 lines) of chapter 58.

[68] By synecdoche Psellos for variety actually uses the word for axle, having employed that for chariot in the previous chapter.

This new imperial image had in fact begun in the previous reign. "When the reins of the Empire were put into the hands of the elderly Michael, as he was unable to control the motion of the imperial chariot since the horses had immediately taken off with him, he rendered the theatrical show[69] quite disorderly. So, being overwhelmed at the confusion, he stepped down from his equestrian position and took his place with the common people,[70] although he ought to have held out and not slackened much on the bridle. He was like a man as it were stripped of his power and running once more his former life" (7.56.1–9: ἐπειδὴ τῷ πρεσβύτῃ Μιχαὴλ ἡ τῆς βασιλείας ἐνεχειρίσθη ἡνία, οὐκ ἐνεγκὼν οὗτος τὴν ξυγκίνησιν τοῦ βασιλικοῦ ἅρματος, τῶν ἵππων εὐθὺς τοῦτον ὑφαρπασάντων, τό τε θέατρον διέθηκεν ἀτακτότερον, καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπερεκπλαγεὶς τὸν θόρυβον, τῆς ἱππικῆς ἀποβεβηκὼς τάξεως ἔστη μετὰ τῶν ψιλῶν· δέον γὰρ ἀντέχειν καὶ μὴ πάνυ τι ἀφεῖναι τὸν χαλινόν, ὁ δ' ὥσπερ ἀποζωννυμένῳ ἐῴκει τὸ κράτος καὶ εἰς τὴν προτέραν παλινδρομοῦντι ζωήν).

Subsequently Isaac found "the imperial horses rushing from the starting-line completely uncontrolled[71] and unamenable to the reins. He ought . . . to have practised controlling the chariot gently by means of the bridle, broken in the horses, touched them lightly and made clucking noises to them as professionals do, and thus stepped aboard and plied the reins, just as Philip's son rendered Boukephalos obedient to the rein. But he wanted to see all at once the chariot pulled along in a straight line . . . and with much use of the bridle he restrained and checked the horses as they were running in disorderly manner" (7.58.4–16: τούς τε βασιλείους ἵππους τῆς ἀφετηρίας ταχὺ διεκθέοντας καὶ πάντη ἑτερογνάθους καὶ δυσηνίους, δέον . . . ἠρέμα χαλινῷ καταρτῦσαι τὸ ὄχημα καὶ μεταθεῖναι τοὺς ἵππους,

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[69] The word picks up the opening of this sentence in which the theatrical scene (σκηνή) involving Theodora came to an end. On theatrical imagery see below, pp. 42–44.

[70] This is a very loose translation: the word (ψιλός) has the primary meaning of "bare" or "naked", indicating that they did not wear the garb of a charioteer, and thus it nicely foreshadows the verb I translated by "stripped" (ἀποζώννυμι), which is literally "strip of girdle". "Running once more" (παλινδρομέω) helps to take the equestrian imagery into his private life after abdication.

[71] In Classical Greek ἑτερόγναθος means "with one side of the mouth harder than the other" (e.g. Xenophon, *Eq.* 1.9), but in the late ninth century Photios had glossed the word as ἀπειθής, ἢ ἄπληστος ("disobedient or greedy"). Psellos possibly means that they were pulling on the bit to one side.

παραψαῦσαί τε τεχνικῶς καὶ περιποππύσαι, καὶ οὕτως ἐπιβῆναι καὶ τῇ ἡνίᾳ ἐφεῖναι, ὥσπερ δὴ ὁ τοῦ Φιλίππου εὐήνιον τὸν Βουκέφαλον πεποίηκεν, ὁ δὲ βουλόμενος ἀθρόον εὐθυφορούμενον μὲν ἰδεῖν τὸ πρότερον . . . τοὺς δέ γε ἀτάκτως θέοντας ἵππους πολλοῖς χαλινοῖς ἀνείργων καὶ ἀνασειράζων).

This same imagery had been used earlier in the *Chronographia*, for Constantine Lichoudes "did not hand over the bridle to him [Constantine IX], and remarked in the manner of a philosopher that as far as he was concerned he did not wish for the emperor's ruin, but that at the time when he did step down from the chariot himself and the administration passed to the emperor he would not be envious of the wholesale change" (6.180.4–7: οὔτε ὑπέδωκεν ἐκείνῳ τὸν χαλινόν, φιλόσοφον φωνὴν ἐπαφεὶς ὡς οὐκ ἂν ἑκὼν εἶναι διαφθείροι τὸν βασιλέα, ὁπηνίκα δὲ τοῦ ἅρματος ἀποβαίη καὶ ἐπ' ἐκείνῳ ἡ διοίκησις γένοιτο, οὐκ ἂν αὐτῷ φθονήσοι τῆς ὅλης μεταποιήσεως). Shortly after, when Psellos had become influential, he was himself, with his friends John Xiphilinos and John Mauropous, a victim of this new imperial charioteer, in an extended metaphor which nicely emphasizes how insecure advisers to an autocrat could feel. "For all those on board Constantine set in motion the dominant wheel[72] and hurled the majority over the edge or dragged them down; and because we ourselves had mounted over the wheel he thoroughly scared us that with an especially big jolt of the rim he would knock us off since we did not have a very firm grip on the rail" (6.193.7–12: τὸν ἀρχικὸν ἐκεῖνος ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐπιβεβηκόσι τροχὸν κινῶν καὶ τούς γε πλείονας ἀποκρημνίζων καὶ κατασπῶν. ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ τῷ κύκλῳ ἐνεβεβήκειμεν, ἱκανῶς διεπτόησε μήπως ἐπὶ μάλιστα διασείσας τὴν ἴτυν καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀπαράξῃ ἐκεῖθεν, οὐ πάνυ ἀπριὶξ ἐχομένους τῆς ἄντυγος).

The commonplace use of a rein (ἡνία) or bridle (χαλινός) as a check, applicable to horse-riding as well as chariot-racing,[73] receives various treatment. Once it simply serves to curb eloquence (7.48.5–6:

[72] This is presumably the left wheel on which there would be more pressure, and which therefore would have more traction, in going round the turns anti-clockwise. No other ancient or Byzantine author appears to refer to a "dominant" wheel (I am indebted here to a conversation with my colleague, Professor N.B. Crowther).

[73] It is used once also in the context of a caged lion (Romanos IV) not being able to endure the checks put on him (by his wife Eudokia, 7b.10,19–20: τοσοῦτον ἐκεῖνος τὸν χαλινὸν ἐδυσχέραινε).

τὴν πρέπουσαν ἡνίαν τῇ ἐκείνου ἐπιβάλλουσιν εὐστομίᾳ), and once to check some men by eloquence while goads (Psellos can be thinking only of riding here) are applied to others (6a.18.10–12: τοῖς μὲν ἐντιθέασι χαλινόν, τοῖς δὲ οἷα κέντρα τοὺς λόγους ἐπάγουσιν). Constantine IX, according to the author, called his "malady a bridle on his own nature" (6.131.8: χαλινὸν ταύτην τῆς ἰδίας κατωνόμαζε φύσεως), inspiring Psellos' later comment that he controlled his temper "like a charioteer holding in his mettlesome horse" (6.164.8: ὥσπερ τις ἡνίοχος τὸν θυμικὸν ἵππον ἀνακρουόμενος).[74] As a final twist, Isaac, now metamorphosed from charioteer to horse, would have overrun the whole world "if had undergone the discipline of the bridle" (7.62.17: εἰ . . . αὐτὸν κατήρτυε χαλινός), from which experience Michael Doukas' brothers escaped as the emperor gave them a rôle in government since he was unwilling to "lead them by the bridle" (7c.10.3: χαλιναγωγεῖν).[75]

We have seen the state as a ship and an animal, but Psellos regards it also as a building. In observing that the Empire's parlous condition at the time of writing originated in the reign of Zoë and Theodora he opines that "the building has already been destroyed at the time when its binding bonds break up" (6.9.3–4: τότε τὸ δωμάτιον καταλέλυται, ὁπηνίκα καὶ οἱ περισφίγγοντες τοῦτο δεσμοὶ διαλύονται). His continuation that a gathering of clouds prepares for a deluge[76] is probably a separate image (Psellos is not averse from mixing metaphors, as we have just seen), but it may be tied in with the building metaphor since rain does weaken and dissolve mortar. On another occasion[77] his words suggest a metamorphosis of the state from ship to building and back again.

Houses, their component parts and other structures are used in further ways. John the Orphanotrophos advised that his relatives "build the foundations (of their plans) on Theodora" (5.3.11: ἐπ' αὐτῇ τιθέναι τοὺς θεμελίους), while Nature made Constantine Monomachos strong "as if she were laying the sturdy foundations for a beautiful house" (6.125.5: ὥσπερ οἴκῳ καλῷ θεμελίους ὑποθεῖσα

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[74] Psellos effectively links emperor and horse by describing the latter as θυμικός, having used for the former's temper the cognate adjective θυμοειδής, an adjective that was itself applied to horses (first by Xenophon, *Mem.* 4.1.3).

[75] For sport other than chariot-racing see below, pp. 45–46.

[76] Above, pp. 31–32.

[77] Above, p. 30.

στερρούς). With their long spears and battle-axes soldiers standing around Isaac Komnenos "so to speak roofed over the spaces between their ranks" (7.24.35: τὸ μεταίχμιον, ἵν᾽ οὕτως εἴπω, περιωρόφουν). The doors of Constantine's VIII's benefactions were opened to his courtiers (2.3.3–4: πάσας θύρας εὐεργετημάτων ἀνέῳγε), as were those of Constantine Monomachos' heart to Psellos (6.46.18: ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ τῆς καρδίας αὐτῷ πύλαι ἀνεπετάννυντο) and those to the desires of the latter emperor's mistress (6.153.8–9: πάσας ἐπ᾽ αὐτῇ θύρας αἰτήσεων ὑπανοίγνυσιν); while the author himself gets ahead in his story before he has set up the entrance-gates (3.4.10–11: τά . . . στῆσαι προπύλαια) of Romanos III's reign. Walls, on the other hand, were put up to give protection against Zoë (4.17.4–5: παντὶ μὲν ἔρκει, παντὶ δὲ τείχει κατησφαλίζοντο); barbarian generals were employed as a bulwark (ἐπιτείχισμα) against fiercer foes (7.50.19–21); and armies were Homerically drawn up like a tower (1.33.9–10: οἷον καταπυργώσας τὸ στράτευμα), to which a general in battle also was likened. In this last, however, the metaphor, except insofar as it implies great size and stolidity, may be dead, like the English "tower of strength", for Psellos compares the Caesar Constantine Doukas also to "a winged horseman driving his horse against the foe" and the tower "falling on the enemy phalanx both pushes it forward and smashes it into many parts" (7b.33.12–15: ὥσπερ τις πτερωτὸς ἱππότης ἐλᾷ τὸν ἵππον ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐναντίους, καὶ οἷά τις πύργος ἐμπεσὼν τῇ πολεμίᾳ φάλαγγι ὠθεῖ τε ταύτην καὶ εἰς μέρη πολλὰ διασπᾷ), and the Patzinaks are described as towers as they pursue (7.68.15: οἷα πύργοι . . . ἑπόμενοι). A tower is used also in the expression "a tower of wise calculations."[78]

As a student of ancient literature Psellos had an interest in drama, little though there was in Constantinople. His use of theatrical similes and metaphors is, however, disappointing, usually amounting to little more than an indication of unreality or ineffectuality. In the first category comes Michael Kalaphates' laying aside of the fawning side of his character as if "scattering theatrical matters" (5.9.25–26: τὰ τῆς σκηνῆς σκεδαννύς); the same emperor's invention of Zoë's plots against him as "he dramatises the whole business and puts it on the stage" (5.23.9–10: προσωποποιεῖται δὲ τὴν πρᾶξιν καὶ εἰσάγει

[78] Above, p. 22. At 3.15.22–23 he also refers to the building of "a temple within us" in an allusion to 1*Cor.* 3.16–17.

σκηνήν); courtiers' "brilliant transformation as if they were in theatrical rôles" (6.7.4–5: ὥσπερ ἐν σκηνικοῖς σχήμασι μεταμορφουμένων πρὸς τὸ λαμπρότερον) on the accession of Zoë and Theodora; Leo Tornikios behaving as if he had truly been successful in his rebellion against his uncle Constantine Monomachos rather than just "acting on the stage and striking a pose" (6.104.6–7: ὡς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς οἷον δραματουργῶν ἢ πλαττόμενος); Constantine showing off Skleraina as the empress in a theatrical display (6.154.6–7: ταύτην ἐπὶ θεάτρου δεικνύς); and Psellos' own fear, when urged to write the *Chronographia*, that he would either be accused of being a scandal-monger by ferreting out the truth, or, by suppressing or distorting facts, of concocting material as if for a play (6.22.17: ὥσπερ ἐπὶ σκηνῆς).

In the second category (ineffectuality) are the comments that when Romanos III seized Antioch he put up a royal display, but his equipage was theatrical (3.8.5: θεατρικὴν τὴν παρασκευήν) and consequently did not frighten the enemy; and that the Bulgarians, in brief revolt against Michael IV, "decided to posture for a short while as their own rulers and to enjoy the semblance as if they were on the stage" (4.41.11–13: ἔδοξάν τοι ὥσπερ ἐπὶ σκηνῆς βραχύν τινα χρόνον σχηματίσασθαι τὰ τῆς τυραννίδος καὶ ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς ὁμοιώσεως). Similarly the choice of the word σκηνή ("stage", i.e. "drama": 7.56.1) for Theodora's brief reign was probably intended to point its ineffectuality; whereas his calling of Zoë's adulterous affair a δρᾶμα (3.21.16) indicates his contempt. Contempt is apparent again in the lengthy section in which he attacks the character of Constantine Monomachos' favorite Romanos Boïlas (6.141–149), use of the words ὑποκρίνομαι ("act"), ὑποκριτής ("actor", four times), ὑπόκρισις ("acting", thrice), σκηνουργός ("actor"), σκηνή ("drama"), κορυφαῖος ("chorus-leader") eventually leading up to his summation of the whole relationship as a δρᾶμα and the man himself as a δραματουργός ("actor").[79]

Three final allusions to the theatre are different. In describing the tactless reception by Michael VI of Isaac Komnenos as a "drama that violently shook the minds of the soldiers" (7.4.2–3: τοῦτο τὸ δρᾶμα τὰς ἐκείνων γνώμας διέσεισε), Psellos invests the situation with the horror of ancient Greek tragedy. In saying that a man

[79] This should perhaps be translated as "dramatist", but Psellos seems to use the cognate verb in the sense of acting (above, 6.104.7).

announcing Michael's abdication and the acclamation of Isaac "declaims the whole drama to us in tragic manner" (7.37.19: πᾶσαν ἡμῖν ἐκτραγῳδεῖ τὴν σκηνήν),[80] he invokes the grandeur of a classical messenger speech. On the other occasion he was probably simply enamoured of what he could weave from his imagery when he claims that he "was bewildered by the drama [of the deposing of Michael Kalaphates] and struck by the dance of sufferings; but that was only a brief prooimion of worse tragedies" (5.43.11–13: τήν γε σκηνὴν ἀπεθαύμαζον, καὶ τὴν τῶν παθημάτων χορείαν ἐξεπληττόμην· τὸ δὲ ἄρα βραχύ τι προοίμιον χειρόνων τραγῳδιῶν).

Strictly musical similes are not common. Mixing imagery he puts the words into Michael V's mouth when the latter flatters John the Orphanotrophos that the emperor is to him "as the tool is to the craftsman, and that it is not the lyre's song but that of the man who plucks the lyre harmoniously" (5.6.4–6: ὡς ὄργανόν ἐστι τῷ τεχνίτῃ, καὶ ὡς οὐχὶ τῆς κιθάρας τὸ μέλος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ τὴν κιθάραν μουσικῶς κρούοντος). Psellos' retirement from the court to take the cowl "deprived the emperor [Constantine IX] of the enchanting lyre of rhetoric" (6.201.1–2: ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ . . . λογικὴν οὐκ εἶχεν ἔτι κιθάραν τὴν θέλγουσαν). In a curious musical analogy, which he perhaps does not properly understand,[81] he compares the same emperor's alternations of mood in the following terms: "he sought change, falling as they say from the highest to the lowest pitch or desiring a combination of the two" (6.197.19–21: ἐζήτει μεταβολάς, ἀπὸ τῆς ὑπάτης ὃ δή φασι καταπίπτων ἐπὶ τὴν νήτην, ἢ καὶ τὴν σύγκρασιν ἀμφοῖν βουλόμενος). A variation of the double note comes in his description of Isaac's two-fold nature: it was "as if someone were to hear such a string tuned a single time, but which now gave out an harmonious sound and now a harsh"[82] (7.46.13–14: εἴ τι τοιαύτης ἀκούῃ χορδῆς ἅπαξ ἐναταθείσης, νῦν μὲν ἐναρμόνιον, νῦν δὲ σύντονον ἀναπεμπούσης ἦχον).

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[80] Psellos' sudden use of the present tense here is designed to heighten the dramatic quality of the delivery, although he has prepared the reader for the imagery by using the word σκηνή at the beginning of the chapter (7.37.1) before the recital by the first two ineffectual messengers.

[81] He has the emperor fall from the ὑπάτη to the νήτη, which are respectively the highest and lowest of the three strings of the musical scale, but in pitch they are respectively lowest and highest.

[82] The word can mean also "high-pitched".

Saint Paul had made athletic imagery respectable for Christian writers, despite the Church's disapproval of the activities described. Psellos' first simile in this field concerns the young emperor Basil II handing over government to his namesake the *parakoimomenos*, who was "like an athlete in competition, while the emperor Basil was like a spectator, though there not to garland the former as victor but as one who would run and compete himself, contesting with the other in his footsteps" (i.e. imitating him, 1.3.19–22: οἷον ἀθλητὴς καὶ ἀγωνιστής, ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Βασίλειος θεωρός, οὐχ ὅπως ἐκεῖνον στεφανώσειεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς αὐτὸς δραμεῖται καὶ ἀγωνίσεται, κατ᾽ ἴχνος ἐκείνῳ τὴν ἀγωνίαν τιθέμενος).[83] There is only one other simile drawn from a traditional athletic event: when Constantine IX changed his diplomatic tactics "like a wrestler falling out of the circle,[84] he did not have recourse to the same holds[85] but quite forcibly overpowered his opponent with counter holds" (6.190.3–5: ὥσπερ παλαιστὴς ἐκπίπτων τοῦ κύκλου, οὐκ ἐπὶ τὰς αὐτὰς λαβάς, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπεξουσίαζε ταῖς ἀντιλήψεσι σοβαρώτερον). Elsewhere the labours of having Zoë tonsured are described ironically as an ἆθλον ("athletic contest": 5.23.21); rewards[86] are promised for loyalty as if at the games (6.117.7: ὥσπερ ἐπ᾽ ἀγωνίαις); Constantine X Doukas' military exploits won him "garlands bestowed as prizes of valour" (7a.3.11: ἀριστείοις στεφάνοις); citizens were "playing at war" (6.112.13: τὸν πόλεμον παίζοντες) and Michael IV "played at being emperor"[87] (4.9.4: τὴν βασιλείαν . . . διέπαιξε).

Given the prevalence in Byzantium of dicing (although canon law prohibited the clergy from gambling), it is not surprising that Psellos has recourse to it. Thus having just mentioned Constantine VIII's addiction to the past-time, Psellos says that death seized him as he "was playing away the Empire" (2.9.7–8: τὸ κράτος διαπεττεύοντα);

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[83] This immediately follows an image of the high official acting as *paidotribes* to the youthful Basil.

[84] This appears to be the first reference to a circle, as opposed to a pit (σκάμμα), in which the wrestlers had to stay during a bout.

[85] Presumably, as Renauld says, the same as his opponent's.

[86] Psellos uses the rare word ἔπαθλα ("prizes for contests"), but his addition of "at the games" is not otiose since the noun had long before come to be used in non-athletic contexts (e.g. Diodorus Siculus, 28.4).

[87] Psellos may simply mean "he made a mockery of imperial power", but given the previous passage I cannot assert that he did definitely not have game-playing in mind.

and when Theodora first fell ill, her counsellors "turned affairs of the Empire upside down as if playing at dice" (6a19.15–16: ὥσπερ ἐν κύβων παιδιαῖς τὰ τῆς βασιλείας ἐστρέφετο πράγματα). A more subtle use comes in the discussion of who should rule the Empire in 1042. Constantine Dalassenos having been rejected, the court inclined to favour Constantine Artoklinos, as "again the votes were risked" 6.13.1: αἱ ψῆφοι μετεκυβεύθησαν), where I think that the noun, though used for pebbles in one form of dicing, was chosen to make readers immediately think, through its common meaning of votes, of something more formal, only to have that ironically undercut by the blunt reference to dicing in the verb.[88] A last mention of dicing becomes rather confused: Michael VII Doukas "was skilled at throwing a ball into the air; but he was enthusiastic about only one sphere, the heavenly, being familiar with one game of dice, the alternation of (human) affairs,[89] and with one die/cube, the geometric one, which Plato assigns to the Earth"[90] (7c.6.9–13: σφαῖραν μὲν ἀναρρίψαι δεινός, περὶ δὲ μίαν σφαῖραν ἐπτοημένος τὴν οὐρανίαν· κυβείαν μίαν εἰδώς, τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων φορὰν καὶ μεταβολήν, καὶ κύβον ἕνα γεωμετρικὸν ὅν ὁ Πλάτων τῇ γῇ δίδωσι).

The other great Byzantine entertainment, hunting, did not appeal to Psellos and does not appear in his imagery, except in the surely completely dead use of the metaphor of "hunting truth" (6.22.18: τὸ ἀληθὲς . . . θηρώμενος). As an historian he is also well-known for his lack of interest in, and knowledge of, military matters. Yet he does have one effective military metaphor as John the Orphanotrophos and his brothers, "arrayed in ranks together, lay siege to her (Theodora's) soul with the artillery of argument and make an easy capture" (5.4.1–2: κοινῇ συμπαραταξάμενοι ταῖς μηχαναῖς τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων τὴν εὐάλωτον ἐκείνης πολιορκοῦσι ψυχήν). In addition he compares a crane's legs to spears (δόρατα: 7.72.12), and calls a mob pressing round a public blinding a phalanx (5.48.15) to emphasize its hostile disposition, its victim John "having armed himself" (*ibid.* 10–11: ἀνθοπλίσας) mentally to withstand the pain.[91]

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[88] The simple verb κυβεύω is found, however, in non-dicing contexts with the simple signification of "hazard", "risk".

[89] This is derived from the Biblical *Eph.* 4.14 (ἐν τῇ κυβείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων).

[90] *Timaeus* 55e.

[91] In using the word πρόδρομος ("running in advance") for his own eloquence which paved the way for his later influence with Constantine IX (6.45.6–8), Psellos

Commonplace imagery does, of course, occur in Psellos, since no writer can be quite immune to time-worn similes and metaphors. These include comparisons with figures of antiquity,[92] mainly Homeric, but none Biblical:[93] Achilles (6.126.1; 7.84.2; 7a.6.6), Athene[94] (6.150.2), Giants (4.50.4), Hera (6.150.2), Herakles (4.27.5; 6.198.11–13;[95] 7c.13.2), Herodotus (6.24.12: Psellos shows off by calling him only the son of Lyxes), Lysias (7.48.3–8), Maenads (5.26.8), Nireus (6.126.1–2), Plato's demiurge (7.62.6), Proteus (6.152.11) and Xenokrates (7.47.3). He gives us also a list of metaphorical endearments that he claims Constantine IX put in letters to him when the author left the court: "eye,"[96] "medicine of the soul", "heart", "light" and "life" (6.198.7–9: ὀφθαλμός . . . ἴαμα τῆς ψυχῆς . . . σπλάγχνον . . . φῶς . . . ζωή). Two further such endearments were addressed by Zoë to her paramour, the future Michael IV: "statue,"[97] and "flower of beauty" (3.20.7–8: ἄγαλμα . . . κάλλους ἄνθος).[98]

Further expressions of commonplace imagery, some proverbial, some probably "dead,"[99] are "take rule on shoulders" (5.15.1–2: τοῖς ὤμοις μοναρχίαν κατεσκευάκει), "take hold of sceptre" (7.1.5: τῶν σκήπτρων ἐπιλαμβάνονται); "the yoke of dominion" (4.40.24–25: τὸν

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may be employing a dead metaphor, but it was frequently applied to military cavalry (he would, of course, have been most familiar with it as the name of John the Baptist, "the Forerunner").

[92] One is generic: older aristocrats attendant upon Isaac at the time of the rebellion against Michael VI were "not unlike great heroes" (7.24.15: τῆς ἡρωϊκῆς οὐδὲν ἀπειοκότες μεγαλειότητος), an obvious reference in the context to Homer's warriors.

[93] The miracle worked by God in scattering the "Mysians and Triballians" (Patzinaks and Uzes) is, nevertheless, deemed not inferior to those wrought by Moses (7a.23.7–8).

[94] She and Hera are not specifically named, being called "the goddesses in the poem" (τὰς ποιητικὰς θεάς), but the verb (ἐπεμύξαντο) gives a clear reference to their appearance at *Il.* 4.20 and 8.457.

[95] Herakles is not named in this passage, but mention of lion-skin and club identifies him.

[96] This first endearment is nicely picked up at the end of the list when Psellos claims that the emperor "begged that he not be blinded" by the author's departure (6.198.9: παρεκάλει μὴ τετυφλῶσθαι).

[97] For elaboration of this image see below, p. 49.

[98] The other two endearments in this list (ὀφθαλμῶν χάρις and ψυχῆς ἰδία ἀναψυχή) are not metaphorical.

[99] To know whether some of these, when not elaborated, were "dead" to Psellos is, of course impossible. This is particularly the case with single words used metaphorically: e.g. is Psellos thinking of a horse throwing its rider over its neck when he uses the word ἐκτραχηλίζω at 7a.18.8 for emperors being led astray, when its metaphorical use goes back to the fourth century B.C.?

ἐπαυχένιον ζυγὸν . . . τῆς ἀρχῆς), "pre-Euclidean history" (3.12.6: τὰ πρὸ Εὐκλείδου), "shake off the dust of battle" (7.44.4–5: τὸν ἐκ τῆς μάχης κονιορτὸν ἀποσείσασθαι), "charm stones" (6.60.3–4: θέλξαι λίθους), "taste the honey of lips" (7.16.7–9: σου τοῦ τῶν χειλέων ἀπογεύομαι μέλιτος), "hang on lips by ears" (6.161.28: ἐκ τῶν ὤτων τῆς γλώττης ἐκκρέμασθαι), "cut off helping hand" (6.74.23–24: χειρῶν . . . βοήθεια . . . ἀποτέμνειν ταύτην), "words being shot off like a volley of arrows" (7b.31: λόγοι ἀπετοξεύοντο), "frozen with fear" (6.121.13: τῷ δέει παγέντες), a soul "being dyed" (3.15.19: βεβαμμένη), "dancing the dance of death" (of a crane, 7.72.14: ἐπορχουμένη τὸν θάνατον), "sharp as a razor" (7c.16.17: ξυρὸς εἰς ἀκόνην, literally "a razor [put against] a whetstone"), "plaything of fortune" (4.27.2: τύχης παίγνιον), "helmet of salvation" (4.52.18: τοῦ σωτηρίου περικεφαλαία), "dart of jealousy" (7c.8.13: βασκανίας βέλος) to which he adds "malice" (νεμέσεως), "creeping envy" (6.75.7: ἕρπει ὁ φθόνος), "winged horseman" (7b.33.13: πτερωτὸς ἱππότης), "shining virtue" (6.162.6–7: ἡ ἀρετὴ διαλάμπουσα), "gold" as common as "sand" (2.3.4: ψάμμον τὸν χρυσόν), and "his affairs will go in the contrary direction (i.e. get worse) as if the sand had given way beneath him" (i.e. "as if he were walking in quicksand", 6.116.9–10: ὥσπερ ψάμμου ὑποσπασθείσης αὐτῷ, πρὸς τοὐναντίον χωρήσει τὰ πράγματα). Such expressions may also be combined in a single thought: for instance, when Eudokia became a nun, her father "gives the child of his heart as a first-fruit and sacrificial offering to a greater" (2.5.22–23: καὶ ὥσπερ ἀπαρχὴν καὶ ἀνάθημα τῶν αὐτοῦ σπλάγχνων τὴν παῖδα τῷ κρείττονι δίδωσι).

To some common images he has recourse more than once, on only very few occasions with but trivial variation of wording. Thus whereas Zoë was made "a whole burnt-offering"[100] (5.23.6: ὁλοκάρπωμα),[101] prisoners compared themselves to "sacrificial animals" (6.117.17: ἱερεῖα), Constantine IX lay on his death-bed like "a sacrificial animal recently slain as an offering" (6.202.1–2: ἱερεῖον ἄρτι τεθυμένον) and Psellos believed that he was about "to be slain as a sacrificial offering" (7. 38.3: ὥσπερ ἱερεῖον τυθήσεσθαι). Again Michael VII had "an adamantine nature" (7c.11.8–9: ἀδαμαντίνην φύσιν), while Basil II

[100] Here there is a deliberate Biblical metaphor since Psellos adds "I do not know if to the Lord".

[101] Impellizzeri prints ἁλοκάρπωμα.

was "hard and adamantine of nature" (1.32.8: φύσεως στερρός τε καὶ ἀδαμάντινος). Twice he uses the image of weaving for his own composition, once, in a curious mixed simile, merely "providing a head for the woven body" (6.74.4–5: κεφαλὴν ὥσπερ τῷ ὑφαινομένῳ παρεχόμενος) of his dislocated narrative of Constantine Monomachos' reign, on the other occasion for the same emperor "weaving a eulogy of the finest quality" (6.25.18–19: διὰ μιᾶς τῆς ἀρίστης ποιότητος ἐξυφαίνω τὴν εὐφημίαν).

Greater effort was taken with the image of a burden: most citizens "cast off like a burden" (4.2.22: ὥσπερ τι ἄχθος ἀποθεμένων) the dead Romanos III; the Patriarch Michael Keroullarios "was jettisoned like a burden on the shoulders" (7.65.10–11: ὥσπερ ἐπωμάδιον ἄχθος ἀπεφορτίσατο); some strong men "on either side propped him [the sickly Constantine IX] up [on his horse] as if he were baggage" (6.129.7–8: διαβαστάζοντες τοῦτον καὶ ἀντιβαστάζοντες ὥσπερ τινὰ φόρτον); and, this time by use of a rare verb, the wholesale removal of Patzinaks into imperial territory "imposed a huge burden" (7.67.14: ἐπιφορτισθέντες). The image of a person as a statue appears simply when he has Zoë adorn her lover with gold "as if he were a statue" (3.20.1: ὥσπερ ἄγαλμα),[102] and in his description of Nature "skilfully working [Constantine IX] in metal as it were" (6.126.5: ὥσπερ εὐτέχνως τορεύσασα); but it is more elaborated for Basil II who, when on horseback, "was moulded in accordance with the images of statues which accurate sculptors have fashioned to suit such a posture" (1.36.5–7: ἐνετύπωτο . . . κατὰ τοὺς τῶν ἀγαλμάτων τύπους ὅσα ἐς τοιοῦτον σχῆμα οἱ ἀκριβεῖς πλάσται συνήρμοσαν). The same emperor "made his road to power smooth for himself" (1.31.2–3: λείαν ἑαυτῷ τὴν ὁδὸν εὐτρέπισε τῆς ἀρχῆς), a commonplace image which Psellos extends and uses in a quite different context in asserting that "my narrative [of Romanos IV] has been running well, taking [the reader] on a smooth and royal road in the scriptural phrase"[103] (7b.42.1–3: εὔδρομος ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, καὶ διὰ λείας φέρων καὶ βασιλικῆς τῆς ὁδοῦ, ταῦτα δὴ τὰ θεολογικὰ ῥήματα); and while using the same noun for his choice of "a middle course" (6.73.14: μέσην δὲ ὁδὸν βαδίζειν), he changes it for Michael Stratiotikos' choice of "the path of destiny" (7.16.11: τὸν πεπρωμένον οἶμον πορεύσομαι).

[102] This briefly precedes its use as an endearment (above, p. 47).
[103] *Num.* 20.17, where it is used in a literal sense.

For his own effect on other people he asserts that Eudokia Makrembolitissa "worshipped me above all others as divine and deified me" (7b.4.14–15: με ὑπὲρ πάντας ἐθείαζέ τε καὶ ἐξεθείαζεν); while for his first meeting with Constantine Monomachos he has in mind the more specific comparison of himself with Apollo (or possibly Zeus) in claiming that "just as those possessed by a god are divinely inspired in a way not clear to others, so his pleasure was inexplicable" (6.46.3–5: ὥσπερ οἱ θεοφορούμενοι ἀδήλως τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐνθουσιῶσιν, οὕτω δὴ κἀκείνῳ αἰτίαν οὐκ εἶχεν ἡ ἡδονή).[104]

Common expressions are also extended, either with more words than are usually afforded or with definite additions. Thus, for the first type, most simply Psellos compares the tall Maniakes to "a hill or peak of a mountain" (6.77.4–5: ὥσπερ εἰς κολωνὸν ἢ κορυφὴν ὄρους); and, more wordily in assessing the career of Constantine IX, says "if . . . as though on the balance the better scale carrying some remarkable load of deeds is weighed down . . ." (6.162.4–8: εἰ . . . ὥσπερ ἐπὶ ζυγοῦ ἡ κρείττων πλάστιγξ κάτωθεν βρίθει ἀξιόλογόν τι βάρος τῶν πράξεων φέρουσα . . .). For the second, a slightly altered Homeric quotation of sleep settled on the eyelids has sleep then also quickly flitting away (3.24.4–5: ὅ τε ὕπνος ἄκροις αὐτοῦ τοῖς ὄμμασιν ἐφιζάνων ταχέως ἀφίπτατο), and a reference to the Delphic oracle becomes, in a disagreement over the nature of Isaac's illness, "may your Dodonian bronze cauldron speak the truth, and my tripod lie" (7.74.16–17: ἀληθεύοι μὲν τὸ σὸν Δωδωναῖον χαλκεῖον, ὁ δ' ἐμὸς τρίπους ψευδέσθω). More amusingly the expression "bite off one's tongue" he extends with the words "with one's teeth and spit out the organ" (5.16.14–15: τὴν γλῶσσαν τεμεῖν [τε] τοῖς ὀδοῦσι καὶ ἀποπτύσαι τὸ μέλος).

On occasion a common image is given an unusual application: while Romanos Argyros' body rose to the surface of the water where it "floated haphazardly like a cork" (3.26.28–29: ὥσπερ φελλὸν ἀλόγως ἐπισαλεύοντα), the soul, while still attached to the body, can "float above it like a cork" (6.197.24: δίκην φελλοῦ ἀκρόπλουν). More notable images are men "being tall and of equal height as if

[104] Ironically in his other divine similes he castigates rulers who desire to set themselves over their subjects "as gods" (6.75.19: ὡς θεοί), and does not associate himself with the populace which "thought that his [Michael Stratiotikos'] entry into the capital was like an epiphany of a higher being" (7.40.5–6: ὥσπερ τινὰ κρείττονος ἐπιφάνειαν τὴν ἐκείνου πρὸς τὴν βασιλίδα ἡγούμενοι εἴσοδον).

measured by a ruler" (1.15.21–22: ὑψηλοὺς καὶ ἰσομέτρους ὥσπερ ὑπὸ κανόνα τὸ μέγεθος); the proud *parakoimomenos* Basil becoming after death a "memorial stone to his life" (1.21.8: στήλη τῷ βίῳ), an image perhaps inspired by the rigidity of his paralysed body shortly before; the razing of buildings giving the impression of "the earth relieving itself of their burden and hurling away their foundations" (5.29.7–8: ὥσπερ αὐτῶν τῆς γῆς τὸ ἄχθος ἀποφορτιζομένης καὶ ἀπορριπτούσης τοὺς θεμελίους); the two-word simile of Michael Kalaphates guarding Zoë as carefully as if he were a tax-collector keeping an eye on a ship to collect harbour-dues (5.36.5–6: οἷον ἐλλιμενίσαντος); the contract allowing Skleraina to live in the palace with Constantine IX being termed a "mixing bowl of love" (6.58.11: κρατῆρα φιλίας), a phrase the historian attributes to the courtiers; Isaac I methodically overturning even the most trivial of his predecessor's legislative acts "like analysts moving from the complex to the simple" (7.60.11–12: ὥσπερ οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν συνθέτων ἐπὶ τὰ ἁπλᾶ ἀναλύοντες) and casually expropriating for public purposes Church monies "as if someone were picking up grains of sand from the sea-shore" (*ibid.* 19–20: ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ψάμμον τινὰ ὑφέλοι ἐκ θαλαττίας θινός); and the irregular heart-beats of the same emperor on his death-bed being likened to teeth on an iron saw (7.77.17–18: ὥσπερ ὅσοι τῶν τεμνόντων σιδήρων ἐς ὀδόντας διῄρηνται).[105] When Psellos is musing on the unenviable life of emperors, he observes that Mount Athos (a mountain, we must remember, some 6,000 feet high) is more likely to escape notice than any imperial act (6.27.30–31: μᾶλλον ἂν λάθοι τοὺς πολλοὺς ὁ Ἄθως ἢ τὸ πεπραγμένον ἐκείνοις); and when he tried to persuade Isaac Komnenos to slow his climb to the throne since an aspirant should first gain experience and then speculate philosophically, he "called to mind a ladder and how to climb it, and found fault with the over-reaching foot" (7.28.8–9: κλίμακος γοῦν ἐμεμνήμην καὶ ἀναβάσεως, καὶ τὸν ὑπερβάθμιον πόδα κατῃτιώμην). More memorably Psellos' return from a digression is couched as "let us recall the Augusta and the emperor and . . . both awaken them and [then] part them from each other" (6.68.2–3: ἐπανακαλέσωμεν αὖθις εἰς τὴν σεβαστὴν καὶ τὸν αὐτοκράτορα,

[105] In the following chapter Psellos says that he did not himself observe this analogy of the attending physician, but thought that the pulse "was like not a palsied foot but like a man shackled and straining to move" (7.78.4–5: ἐοικότα οὐ παρέτῳ ποδί, ἀλλὰ δεσμώτῃ καὶ βιαζομένῳ τὴν κίνησιν).

καί . . . διεγείρωμέν τε καὶ διέλωμεν, i.e. deal with them separately, for which his suggestion to "store up" [ταμιευσώμεθα] the latter gives another metaphor).

Rarely is Psellos obscure: a notable exception is when he claims that if the emperor had had a few knights, Tornikios' army would have scattered without even a πυρφόρος left, that is the Spartan military priest who guarded the sacrificial fire (6.119.7–9). We have seen repeatedly how he weaves variations on his imagery, and if he does repeat any the application is nearly always changed.[106] In one instance his desire for variety even makes him reverse an image: upon the accession of Zoë and Theodora he says that "then for the first time our age saw women's quarters transformed into an imperial council-chamber" (6.1.2–3: τότε πρῶτον ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνος τεθέαται γυναικωνῖτιν μετασχηματισθεῖσαν εἰς βασιλικὸν βουλευτήριον), while a few chapters later "the desire for more power made women's quarters out of the imperial male apartments" (6.10.10: ἡ τοῦ πλείονος ἔφεσις τὸν βασιλικὸν ἀνδρῶνα γυναικωνῖτιν πεποίηκεν). I could find only one instance of repetition in extended imagery with exactly the same application, an instance in which the second passage is merely a drastically shortened version of the first. Psellos praises Constantine X Doukas on the ground that he outshone his ancestors as did Achilles, but on the latter occasion he merely names Aeacus and Peleus (7a.6.6–7), whereas in the former he refers to Aeacus as being begotten of Zeus according to the myths and Peleus as being exalted in Greek history as the bed-fellow of Thetis, herself a goddess of the sea (7.84.1–10). On the other hand, as we have seen on a number of occasions, most notably with Isaac I as both a surgeon operating on his patient and as a horseman riding him, he is not averse from mixing metaphors; although he is more likely simply to give a sequence as more comparisons come to his mind: for instance at 6.77 he uses images of a mountain, a storm-wind, thunder and a lion to describe Maniakes in addition to saying that the general had hands that could shake walls and shatter gates of bronze.

In his *Chronographia* Psellos' imagery is almost exclusively Classical, with his own variations, rather than Biblical or Patristic. It covers a

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[106] This is a Byzantine trait at which Psellos excels. It is analagous with the Byzantine practice concerning quotations and allusions, although there we find a much greater emphasis upon eschewing any repetition at all of a quotation (see Littlewood (1988) 137–154 and Littlewood (1999) 21–22, 35–36.

wide range of subjects, and is at times remarkably striking and virtually always exquisitely apposite: unlike Homer, who frequently began a simile with relevance of application and was then carried away by picturesque details before returning to the initial point of his trope, Psellos tends to make every detail contribute to his purpose. As a good rhetorician, in this respect as in others, he composed the *Chronographia* with consummate care.[107]

[107] It would be instructive to extend this study to all of Psellos' works (a tiny beginning is perhaps made here in the Appendix with an examination of the *Historia Syntomos*). My general impression is that he is always careful with choice of imagery, but that the extent of his elaboration of it varies considerably from work to work; and that he sometimes employs a greater proportion of Biblical imagery. There seems to be a correlation between greater elaboration and preference for Classical imagery (and allusions), which is dictated not solely by subject-matter but also by expected readership or audience: the more this was his fairly close circle of like-minded friends and students, the more likely he was to elaborate and largely eschew Biblical imagery, whereas his works that were probably read or heard by a wider range of people tend to have less elaboration and fewer Classical but more Biblical imagery and allusions. We may perhaps suppose that this, if my general impression is correct, was not only in order to be more intelligible to his wider audience but also, in the case of Biblical versus Classical, to avoid antagonising real or potential enemies (a parallel may be drawn here with Photios who, in his letters when patriarch, "restricts his classical quotations in the main to [those] addressed to a small number of [presumably well-educated] recipients, the majority of his letters being entirely free of all secular learning" [Littlewood (1988) 149]).

APPENDIX

IMAGERY IN THE *HISTORIA SYNTOMOS*

The so-called *Historia Syntomos* is a quite different type of historical work from the *Chronographia*, and one with less indulgence towards imagery. Nonetheless a survey of the imagery in the former may be used in the debate over the validity of the manuscript's claim that this short work too is of Psellan authorship.[108]

In the single vegetal instance "the emperor Julian is a thorn growing alongside the fragrant rose that is Constantine the Great's pious line" (57, p. 38.84–85: ἄκανθα ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰουλιανὸς τῷ εὐώδει ῥόδῳ τῷ εὐσεβεῖ γένει Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ πάνυ παραφυεῖσα).

Amongst animals the lion is foremost. Nikephoros II Phokas, after his seizure by Tzimiskes, is described as "the hunted-down lion" (105, p. 104, 73–74: τεθηραμένον τὸν λέοντα). Leo IV is "a beast in both nature and name" (88, p. 78.1–2: θηρίον . . . καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ ὄνομα), Leo V "a beast outright in his nature" (90, p. 80.47–48: θηρίον ἄντικρυς τὴν ψυχήν), although in a mixed metaphor the latter "threw off his mask and bared the snake lurking within" (*ibid.* 50–51: τὸ προσωπεῖον ἀφελόμενος τὸν ὑποκείμενον ἐγύμνωσε δράκοντα).

For water we find Titus "unstinting . . . his hand a flowing river" (26, p. 18.87–88: ἄφθονος . . . χεῖρα ῥεῦμα ποτάμιον), while the iconoclast Michael II "stirred up wave upon wave against our holy faith" (96, p. 86.40: κῦμα ἐπὶ κύματι κατὰ τῆς ἱερᾶς ἡμῶν πίστεως ἤγειρε). The metaphorical ship and harbour are combined in a description of Theodosius I "putting the tiller of the church of Constantinople into the hands of Gregory of Nazianzos, who, having taken over the true belief of the Divinity as it was being tossed by the waves, brings it to anchor in harbours sheltered from the billows" (62, p. 47.24–26: τῆς ἐκκλησίας αὐτῷ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐγχειρίζει τοὺς οἴακας, ὃς κυμαινομένην τὴν ἀληθῆ τοῦ θείου δόξαν παραλαβὼν λιμέσιν ἀκλύστοις ἐγκαθορμίζει). More briefly Romanos II "charged their mother Theophano to pilot the lives of their sons" (103, pp. 97–98.58–59: τὴν μητέρα τούτων Θεοφανὼ ἐπιτάξας τὴν ζωὴν αὐτοῖς διακυβερνᾶν), and Julia Mamaea was not "sufficiently competent for imperial piloting" (40, p. 26.49: αὐτάρκης πρὸς βασιλείαν κυβέρνησιν).

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[108] All quotations are taken from W.J. Aerts, *Michaelis Pselli Historia Syntomos*, Berlin 1990. References are to chapter, page and line. Translations are my own.

For fire we find another familiar image since "Paul of Samosata and Artemon secretly kindled the sparks of their own heresy" (36, p. 24.10–11: Παῦλος ὁ Σαμοσατεὺς καὶ᾽ Αρτέμων τῆς ἰδίας κακοδοξίας τοὺς σπινθῆρας ὑπεφλεγον).

In the realm of medicine doctors are called "disciples of Asklepios" (39, p. 26.40: τῶν᾽ Ασκληπιαδῶν).

For chariot-racing and horse-riding Galba appears as "not guiding the Empire nobly by the reins" (22, p. 14.39: οὐδὲ τὴν βασιλείαν γενναίως ἡνιοχῶν); Julia Mamaea "tamed her son [Alexander Severus], who was eager to rule, like a colt and held him back by pulling violently at the bit; and he, as he was being guided by the reins, obediently bowed down in response to the wound inflicted by her hand" (40, p. 26.50–52: τὸν υἱὸν ὥσπερ τινὰ πῶλον ἐπὶ τὸ βασιλεύειν ὁρμῶντα ἐδάμαζε καὶ κατεῖχε χαλιναγωγοῦσα σφοδρῶς. ὁ δὲ ὑπέκυπτε πρὸς τὸ τῆς χειρὸς ἕλκον ἡνιοχούμενος); and Constantine VII, when demoted to fifth in the hierarchy by Romanos I, is likened to an "out-runner" (102, p. 94.86: παρήορος), the technical term for the horse which pulls the chariot at the side of the principal pair.

There is a single image taken from a piece of construction, Nikephoros Phokas being celebrated as "the great and unshaken tower of the Romans" (105, p. 104.84: ὁ μέγας Ῥωμαίων πύργος καὶ ἄσειστος).

For sport there is only Alexander "playing at being emperor" (101, p. 92.54: διαπαίξας τὴν βασιλείαν), where it is clear that the metaphor is not dead since this is the conclusion of a sentence asserting that he died while intending to play a ball-game (*ibid.* 53: σφαιρίσαι, which may be polo).

The single military metaphor is to "weapons of logic, some for close combat, others also for use at a distance" (62, p. 46.27: λογικοῖς ὅπλοις τὰ μὲν ἀγχιμάχοις, τὰ δὲ καὶ πόρρωθεν). This occurs in the lengthy series of images for the defence of the Church by Gregory of Nazianzos.

For miscellaneous imagery we find that Theophano was "a statue of beauty" (102, p. 94.5: ἄγαλμα κάλλους), and Tacitus "an incidental waste [?],[109] so to speak, of Fortune" (51, p. 32.73–74: τύχης, ἵν᾽ οὕτως εἴπω, γέγονε παρανάλωμα). Domitian's fraternal relationship

[109] Aerts translates by "toy". It is presumably just a variation on the usual "plaything (παίγνιον) of Fortune".

with Titus is indicated by the fact that "he was from the same swaddling-clothes" (27, p. 18.2–3: τῶν αὐτῶν σπαργάνων ἐγεγόνει). The final image is of Didius Julianus not sharing any wealth with his soldiers as "he, as it were, filled his pockets[110] with treasures" (35, p. 24.92–93: ὥσπερ κατακολπίσας τοὺς θησαυρούς).

Excluded from the above are the instances of imagery that the author gleaned from a collection of sayings attributed to emperors,[111] and also the four drawn from the Bible.[112]

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[110] Whereas elsewhere the verb is related to the meaning of κόλπος as a bay, Aerts is surely right in associating it here with that of the fold in the garment commonly employed as a pocket.

[111] They are: Phokas "likened a man moved to pity to a tree on the point of being rent by the wind" (75, p. 62.34–35: τὸν ἐπικλώμενον ἐπὶ δάκρυσι δένδρῳ εἴκαζεν ἑτοίμως ῥηγνυμένῳ ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος); Constantine IV asserted that "it was necessary to destroy not only the father serpent but also his brood" as model for imperial policy (80, p. 70.58–59: δεῖν . . . μὴ [μόνον supplementum est?] τὸν πατέρα ὄφιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ γέννημα ἀναιρεῖν); Justinian II prayed for restoration on the ground that "after a rain-cloud there comes the sun" (81, p. 72.90: μετὰ νέφος ὁ ἥλιος); Leo I said that "as the sun does not allow to be unilluminated the man on whom he casts his clear rays, so an emperor would not allow to be unpitied whomever he may see with his own eyes, if he were to pay regard to the rank of emperor" (65, p. 50.6–7: ὡς οὔτε ἥλιος ἀλαμπῆ ἐᾷ ὃν βάλλει καθαραῖς ταῖς ἀκτῖσιν, οὔτε βασιλεὺς ἀνοίκτιστον ὃν ἴδοι τοῖς ὄμμασιν, εἴ γε τὸ βασιλέως τηροίη ἀξίωμα); Constantine I used to say in connexion with repentant villains that "the diseased part of the sick man must be amputated, not that which has recovered" (55, p. 36.54–55: τὸ νοσοῦν μέλος ἀποκοπτέον τῷ ἀρρωστοῦντι, οὐ μὴν τὸ ὑγιείας τετυχηκός); Constantius II, on hearing of his Caesar Julian's tyrannical ways, observed that "festering internal ulcers are not cut out until they have burst forth and become visible" (56, p. 38.76–77: τὰ ὕπουλα τῶν ὑποιδημάτων οὐκ ἄλλως τέμνεται, εἰ μὴ πρὸς τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν ἐξανθήσει), where the second verb gives a clearly dead metaphor of a plant breaking into flower; and Carinus boasted that "his head was no less bald than he would make King Arsaces' realm bare of inhabitants" (53, p. 34.11–12: οὐδὲν ἧττον τῆς <ἐμ>ῆς κεφαλῆς ψιλοτέραν τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως Ἀρσάκου ἀρχὴν τῶν ἐνοικούντων ποιήσομαι).

[112] Gregory of Nazianzos is hailed as "a sturdy wall and pallisade for some, to others as an axe splitting a rock, and to others as a fire amid thorns" (τῶν μὲν τεῖχος ὀχυρὸν καὶ χαράκωμα, τοῖς δὲ πέλεκυς κόπτων πέτραν, τοῖς δὲ πῦρ ἐν ἀκάνθαις), quotations from, respectively, *Jer.* 15.20, *ibid.* 23.29 and *Ps.* 117.12. Gaius in his sexual licentiousness is described as "drawing his pleasures from the well of others" (19, p. 12.3–4: ἐξ ἀλλοτρίων φρεάτων τὰς ἡδονὰς ἀρυόμενος), a quotation from *Prov.* 23.27.

MICHAEL PSELLOS IN A HAGIOGRAPHICAL LANDSCAPE: THE LIFE OF ST. AUXENTIOS AND THE ENCOMION OF SYMEON THE METAPHRAST

Elizabeth A. Fisher

Prolific polymath that he surely was, Michael Psellos ventured into the realm of traditional hagiography only once.[1] His sole contribution to the *genre* was, however, a hagiographical *tour de force*. *The Life and Conduct of Our Holy Father Auxentios on the Mountain* runs to nearly 2,000 lines and occupies 88 pages in its most recent edition.[2] In composing it, Psellos observed and adapted the guidelines for good hagiographical writing which he elaborates at some length in his *Encomion on Symeon the Metaphrast*.[3] These guidelines incorporate and extend the rhetorical prescriptions contained in the treatises of Aphthonios and Hermogenes familiar to Psellos, a devotee of the art of rhetoric as taught and practiced in Byzantium.[4] These prescriptions may be summarized with a brevity alien to Psellos himself as follows: (1) tell the truth, (2) adopt a graceful writing style accessible to a general audience, (3) portray characters vividly, giving them appropriate words to speak, and (4) add descriptive geographical passages and pleasing *ekphraseis* to the narrative. In addition to these prescriptions based in good rhetorical practice, Psellos adduces several recommendations particular to the writing of hagiography and especially effective for the society he himself knew: (i) extend and explicate the message of holy scripture, (ii) relate the virtues of the saintly subject to the lives and concerns of the contemporary audience, and (iii) appeal to an educated audience by incorporating brief learned digressions on various specialized topics.

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[1] I wish to thank several scholars whose comments and suggestions have greatly improved this paper as I developed it: the participants in the Notre Dame workshop, members of the audience at the Thirtieth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference (Baltimore MD 2004), and my colleague Denis Sullivan.

[2] *Orat. hag.* All references in this paper to the text of Psellos' hagiographical orations are to page and line number in this edition.

[3] *Orat. hag.* 267–288.

[4] For a fuller consideration of this topic, see Fisher (1993) 43–49 and Høgel (2002) 141, 154–56.

How did these principles affect Symeon's actual practice as a hagiographer? Psellos is ready to tell us:

> <He treats> the earlier <account> of events as an archetype, keeps his attention fixed upon it, and does not depart from it lest he appear to be producing something unlike and contradictory to his model. He entirely alters the style (τὴν ὅλην ἰδέαν) not by changing its substance (τὴν ὕλην), but by correcting faults in expression (τὸ ἡμαρτημένον τῶν εἰδῶν), and not by making innovations in the basic message (τὰς ἐννοίας) <of the work> but by transforming its level of diction (τὸ τῆς λέξεως σχῆμα). When a work lapses into inconsistencies of narrative (ἀνωμαλίαις . . . διηγημάτων and detours from its purposes (μεταλλαγαῖς ὑποθέσεων), he is neither confused nor dismayed but stands unflinching, like a consummate helmsman plying his rudder with utmost skill when his ship is awash <in the sea> (p. 283, l. 285–295).

For Psellos, recognizing an authoritative source for the life of a saint and following the substance of that source faithfully is key to maintaining truth and accuracy in narrative, unless the source contains inconsistencies or deviates from the correct exposition of its saintly subject. In that case, Psellos implies, a responsible hagiographer silently and respectfully makes corrections. We shall see in the course of this study that Psellos allowed himself considerable freedom in correcting information in his source that he believed inconsistent with a coherent picture of Auxentios' activities.

Psellos had little difficulty in recognizing the earliest and most authoritative source for the Life of St. Auxentios; it is an anonymous biography of the late fifth century, untouched by Symeon Metaphrastes but published with his works in the *Patrologia Graeca* volume 114 (1377–1436).[5] The author of this source claims that his information came from on-site interviews with the saint's closest associate on the mountain, an unnamed and unlettered man from Mysia (Migne 1428 B11–15). This source, which I shall call the Migne life, is clearly the basis for the other six surviving *Vitae* of Auxentios, including that by Psellos.[6]

Psellos continues his consideration of the practical application of rhetoric to hagiography by examining the subject of geographical descriptions:

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[5] On the relationship of the anonymous life to the work of Symeon the Metaphrast, see Høgel (2002) 122–23.

[6] The six adaptations of the Migne life and their relationship to it and to one another are described and analyzed by Ioannou (1971) 53–56.

> At times in his writings <Symeon> also provides a geographical description of the fatherland of the saint he is praising. He designates a portion of the entire world and refers <the country> to one of its regions. He then makes a few remarks concerning the rivers <of the area> and moreover adds scientific comments about their sources, about the opportune location of <regional> cities, and about the temperature and climate, even though some are truly deaf to his observations and do not notice them (p. 283, l. 296–302).[7]

In Psellos' mind, a consideration of place provides an especially promising opportunity to insert a learned digression of the sort mentioned above as recommendation (iii) for effective hagiographical writing.

After remarking that Symeon displays grace, flexibility, versatility, and balance in his use of rhetoric, Psellos notes that Symeon is also master of the judiciously deployed *ekphrasis*:

> <Symeon> pleases me at least in his audience when his narrative ascends a mountain or descends into a cave, sets one of his ascetic subjects beneath a pine or oak tree, and imagines food for him from plants and drink from springs. For he adorns such narratives with locutions blooming in beauty and with colorful rose gardens of rhetorical devices. He presents the everyday activities of the time as something the audience can picture rather than <simply> as something <the saint> did (p. 284, l. 315–322).

In this paper I would like to examine Psellos' use of place in his *Life of St. Auxentios*. In the course of this discussion, I think it will become clear that Psellos uses place as a literary device to far greater effect and with much more sophistication that Symeon ever did. He adapts rhetorical prescription (4) regarding geography and place by including historical information, for example, but he actually avoids the popular rhetorical *ekphrasis*—no mountains, caves, fragrant pines or fresh springs for him. Mentioning place in the narrative serves a more interesting function for Psellos, who treats place to portray

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[7] Here Psellos refers rather obscurely to passages from the writings of Symeon such as "His fatherland <was> the province of Bithynia and <his> village was called Marykaton, located at the northern portions of <Lake> Apollonias" (*Vita s. Joannici abbatis*, Migne 116, 37 A10–12); also "Samosata is a city of Syria, <and> the <River> Euphrates flows alongside the city; the city is the fatherland of Lucian" (*Vita et martyrium sancrosancti martyris Luciani*, Migne 114, 397 D1–2) and "The fatherland of this blessed <man>, which lay between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, is Mesopotamia, which comes by its name naturally" *Vita s. Danielis Stylitae* (Migne 116, 972 B1–5).

character and personality vividly, consistent with the recommendation (3) for good hagiography. In the process of integrating references to place, however, Psellos must sometimes correct what he considers erroneous impressions or downright errors in his source in order to create an appropriately forceful and dramatic representation of his subject. Accordingly, he may intentionally stray from the accurate representation of his source and even from the truth, in violation of hagiographical principle (1). Sinning thus, Psellos is in good literary company. Plato seems to have employed the same creative strategy by setting his dialogues in places appropriate for the tone and contents of the topics under discussion without regard for historical accuracy.[8] In this paper I would like to examine several telling instances in which Psellos uses place creatively and in a different way from his source.

Auxentios' early career was in Constantinople, a setting exploited with relish in the Migne life, where specific mention of the regions Hebdomon (Migne 1380 B4) and Vattopolion (1384 A1)[9] enables an audience in Constantinople to identify readily with the setting of the saint's early, worldly adventures. Psellos in contrast deletes any specific reference to Vattopolion (p. 19, l. 295–313) but emphasizes the Hebdomon district, where the saint's ascetic mentor John lived. The Migne life gives details of John's ascetic practices, noting that he stood in a cage and thus foreshadowing Auxentios' adoption of this discipline. Psellos, however, omits the cage entirely from his description of John's place of residence and comments only that he lived in the Hebdomon district "upon an unbroken rock, where he was exposed to the elements" (p. 12, l. 131–32). Psellos will eventually locate Auxentios in a similar desolate site, acknowledging, like the Migne life, John's influence upon Auxentios' eremitic life but including only those details of ascetic practice consistent with an impression of his spiritual disciplines which Psellos considers correct. For Psellos, mentioning the Hebdomon (or Seventh) district of Constantinople is interesting not only as an accurate geographical detail linking the city Auxentios knew with contemporary life (see hagiographical principles (1) and (ii) above), but also as an opportunity for a learned

[8] Clay (2002) 18–20. I am grateful to John Ziolkowski for this reference.

[9] Vattopolion is tentatively identified by Janin as the region Porphyropoleia, perhaps in the area of Ta Narsou on the third hill near the Golden Horn, a district where purple fabric was sold; see Janin (1964) 99.

numerological digression on the theological importance of the number seven, thus accommodating principle (iii) above: "<John> inhabited only a tiny bit of earth, but he surveyed all heaven; in this seventh [i.e. earthly] life he dwelt in the so-called seventh region, but he contemplated the eighth way of life, that is the primary, eternal one" (p. 12, l. 132–37).[10]

Auxentios soon abandoned Constantinople and its destructive atmosphere of theological controversy for a life of solitary ascetic practices in the mountain wilderness. Both the literary and the artistic tradition firmly associated the saint with the twin peaks of Mt. Skopas in Bithynia (modern Kayisdag), an identification which Psellos clearly acknowledges in the full title of his biography: *The Life and Practices of our Holy Father Auxentios on the Mountain.* The *Menologion of Basil II* (Vat. gr. 1613) shows the dignified and formidable saint, whose feast day is February 14, in a fantastical landscape centered between two rugged and inhospitable mountain peaks. This image demonstrates the popularity and prevalence of associating man and mountain in the visual tradition both before and during Psellos' time, since the manuscript dates from the late tenth or early eleventh century and was the model for the images in the luxurious eleventh-century "imperial" menologia, which contain exact copies of its miniatures.[11]

Once arrived in Bithynia and upon his mountain, Psellos' Auxentios never leaves the sphere of its influence; this, despite the fact that the Migne life tells us that Auxentios twice returned briefly to Constantinople at the height of his fame as a holy man (see below) in order to provide theological guidance to the emperor at the time of the Council of Chalcedon (Migne 1405 D5–1408 B2 and 1408 C11–1410 A15). Psellos, in contrast, ignores the saint's brief journeys back to Constantinople. For him, Auxentios' initial departure from the capitol must be final and complete, a symbol of his new life and new identity, which will be connected inextricably with Mt. Skopas and the region of Chalcedon.

The Migne life notes only that Auxentios went from Constantinople to "a comparatively remote part of Bithynia, journeying ten miles

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[10] For the commentators on Aristotle, seven symbolizes human affairs, while eight pertains to the moon (e.g. Alexander Aphrodiesiensis, *In metaph.* 38.16–39.2); for Christian writers, seven represents earthly life, while eight pertains to eternity (*Orat. min.* 4.181–84 and Origenes, *Selecta in Psalmos* 1624 B13–C1).

[11] Ševčenko (1991).

from Chalcedon (ἀπὸ δέκα μιλίων Χαλκηδόνος) to stand upon a rocky <pinnacle> on the flank of the peak called Oxeia" (1385 A4–7). Although Psellos repeats this basic topographical information, he omits any mention of exact mileage and emphasizes that the city of Chalcedon and the two peaks of Mt. Skopas are in close proximity. Psellos observes:

> <Auxentios> passed a slight distance beyond Chalcedon, a city formerly notable and illustrious but now clearly content to avoid being considered the least of the last <among cities>; Auxentios bypassed the city, as I said, and ascended the mountain straight ahead of it, located alongside the city. <This very mountain> in former times was not considered worthy of especially great fame, but now it has been elevated to a position of admiration by association with the virtue of this man; it is called the <place> of Auxentios. <The saint> ascended this mountain, placing his feet upon a peak called Oxeia [i.e., "Sharp"] because of its shape but fixing his heart upon God (p. 23, l. 379–390).

Mention of place gives Psellos an opportunity to establish in the minds of his audience a close topographical relationship between Auxentios' mountain and Chalcedon, as well as to demonstrate his knowledge of historical geography. By commenting upon the profound change in the importance of Chalcedon since the saint's time, Psellos implicitly invites his audience to contrast the fleeting fame of worldly institutions with the saint's enduring reputation and influence, memorialized in the contemporary name of the mountain. These ruminations as well as Psellos' interest in the symbolic significance of Auxentios' rugged mountain retreat would have appealed to the concerns of a sophisticated eleventh-century audience; they also satisfy hagiographical recommendation (iii) above.

The mountain chosen by Auxentios as his place of ascetic struggle is not particularly high, for its two peaks are respectively 406 meters (Oxeia) and 436 meters (Skopas) above sea level.[12] It is in rough terrain, however, and difficult of access. Both the Migne life and Psellos stress this feature of the mountain and explain how locals accidently discovered Auxentios' presence there while venturing onto the mountain in search of wandering flocks. Frustrated in their mission, they happened upon the lonely hermit instead. To their amazement, Auxentios accurately revealed the location of the lost sheep,

[12] Ioannou (1971) 157.

thereby establishing his reputation for divine clairvoyance. The Migne life notes that the local people then returned to the mountain and continues the narrative:

> They found the blessed man standing alone upon his rock and praying to God. They presented as their common opinion (ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἠξίωσαν) that he should go up to stand on the very summit of the mountain and offer prayers on their behalf. He was persuaded by their entreaties and told them to build a little hut (κελλίον) with a cage (κλουβόν) outside it, where he was confined with a joyful heart, singing psalms and saying, 'I have become as a sparrow alone upon the housetop' (Ps. 101, 8). <The locals> became accustomed to climb up and enjoy the benefits of his prayers. For he blessed them through a little window <in his hut>, offered them advice for salvation, and sent them away rejoicing (Migne 1385 C12–D8).

Psellos emphasizes this first, formative episode in Auxentios' eremitic career on the mountain somewhat differently. After describing the clairvoyant revelation of the lost sheep, Psellos notes the return of the locals to Auxentios and continues:

> They presented as their opinion (ἠξίωσαν) that he should relinquish that part of the mountain and climb up onto a pinnacle opposite it, where they constructed a little house (οἰκίδιον)[13] for him. Father <Auxentios> enjoined them <to provide> access routes by which they could climb up and supply him with bodily necessities, and they then descended, leaving him in that place. Thereafter the blessed one, truly a man of God, stood upon the highest peak as if upon the height of virtue and its loftiest pedestal, communing immediately and ineffably with God . . . (p. 26, l. 459–p. 27, l. 468).

Aside from an initial verbal reminiscence of his source (ἠξίωσαν), Psellos departs significantly from the details and vocabulary if not from the general substance of the Migne life. Although he notes that locals built Auxentios a little house, he omits the adjacent cage that the Migne life attributed both to Auxentios and to John, the hermit in Hebdomon. Psellos suppresses this rather exotic detail and concentrates instead on the practicalities of an eremitic life, explaining the provision of roads and food but de-emphasizing Auxentios' role as a local holy man notable for practicing dramatic and somewhat bizarre physical disciplines. The scriptural simile that the Migne life

[13] Psellos' classicizing tastes induce him to change the word his source uses to describe Auxentios' humble dwelling.

extracts from the Psalms and attributes to the saint fails to impress Psellos; he omits it entirely.

Auxentios' reputation as a holy man grew rapidly and attracted many pilgrims to the site. The Migne life not only gives details of his healing miracles but also emphasizes his wide-spread fame by specifying a number of locations from which pilgrims traveled to the mountain, some relatively close, like Constantinople (Migne 1413 D4), Nikomedeia (1385 D11), and the nearby town of Rouphinianai (1413 B14), and some more distant, like Claudiopolis (1393 C8), Phrygia (1391 D2), and "the region of Lydda" (ἀπὸ χωρίου Λύδδων 1400 D9–10).[14] In contrast Psellos specifies only "the great city of Nikomedeia" (p. 28, l. 485–86) and Phrygia (p. 36, l. 663) as places from which pilgrims came and concentrates upon the mountain itself and its power to attract them in an extraordinary simile: ". . . the mountain seemed like a teeming market place (τὸ ὄρος πληθούσῃ ἀγορᾷ ἐοικός)" (p. 38, l. 723). For Psellos, pilgrimage to the mountain was evidence not simply of Auxentios' fame but also a testimonial to the extraordinary nature of the place where he lived. Psellos presents the mountain as a place permeated by the healing presence of the saint when he observes, "If those under the tyrannical domination of a possessing spirit even approached the mountain, they were released like prisoners from their bonds and were at once free both in body and in soul" (p. 29, l. 520–23).

In the course of his ascetic career, Auxentios eventually relocated his hut to the second peak of his holy mountain. Both Psellos and the Migne life state that Auxentios continued teaching, guiding other ascetics, healing the sick and casting out demons in this new location. They describe the site and Auxentios' reasons for choosing it with a slightly different emphasis, however. The Migne life compares Auxentios' new location to his former one in purely physical terms:

> The blessed man did not choose to return to his former mountain, but he decided from the start that his companions should take him to another <mountain>, which was rougher and higher as well as closer to Rhouphinianai; <the mountain was> called Skopas (ἀλλ' εἰς ἕτερον τραχύτερον καὶ ὑψηλότερον· πλησιώτερον δὲ . . . Ῥουφινιανῶν, τοὔνομα Σκῶπα) (Migne 1412 D7–A1).

[14] This may refer to a district of Asia Minor or perhaps to Lydda-Ramla in Palestine.

Here, the Migne life continues, Auxentios' companions built him a wooden hut (κλουβὸν ἐκ ξύλων) like his former one (Migne 1413 A2–6). Auxentios selected this site, the Migne life suggests, because he wanted a more demanding terrain for his ascetic exercises and because he wished to be closer to the monks at Rhouphinianai, who had offered him shelter during his time away from the mountain. Psellos, on the other hand, emphasizes the qualities of the new place selected by Auxentios in terms which are consistent with the Migne life but which suggest a spiritual metaphor: "At any rate, he decided that his followers should build him a shelter (τὴν σκηνήν) on Mt. Skopas, possessed of a setting which was humbler than his former <one> but of a nature which was much rougher (ὃ δὴ ταπεινοτέραν μὲν τοῦ προτέρου τὴν θέσιν εἰλήφει, τραχυτέραν δὲ τὴν φύσιν παρὰ πολύ)" (p. 63, l. 12–15). Psellos repeats the adjective "rougher" (τραχυτέραν) from the Migne life, but changes "higher" to the seemingly contradictory "humbler" (ταπεινοτέραν), qualities descriptive of the mature spiritual disciplines that Auxentios now practices—outwardly more demeaning and essentially more demanding. In this brief passage, Psellos has exploited a description of place to portray vividly the subject of his narrative, following his principle (3) of good hagiography as summarized above.

Auxentios' spiritual activities upon his mountain, however, were not constrained by the limitations of space and place imposed by nature upon ordinary mortals. Both Psellos and the Migne life note an episode towards the end of the saint's life when Auxentios miraculously anticipated the news that Symeon the Stylite had died in faraway Syria. The author of the Migne life presents this episode as a simple illustration of the saint's remarkable clairvoyant powers:

> During a regular night vigil, when <Auxentios> was praying within <his hut> and the others remained awake outside, the blessed man threw open his little window, repeated three times 'Blessed be the Lord,' and groaned deeply. Then he bowed his head and said, 'The light of the East, my children, our father Symeon, has fallen into <eternal> sleep.' When <the others> did not hear what he said because they were singing psalms, the blessed man wept greatly. After <the people> stopped <singing>, he says again, 'Our father among the saints, the pillar and mainstay of truth, Symeon, has gone to <his final> rest, and his blameless pure soul has not deemed it improper to make haste to greet me, <although I am> unworthy and unclean' (Migne 1425 D8–1428 A11).

When a message from the Emperor Leo confirms Auxentios' prescient announcement, "<The people> were greatly astonished and glorified God, <for they were> instructed also on this <occasion> that 'all things are possible with God' (Mark 10, 27; Matthew 19, 26)" (Migne 1428 B5–8). Psellos expands the Migne narrative by exploring the saint's claim that the departed soul of Symeon greeted him during its passage from life. From this detail in his source, Psellos develops an extended account of how the soul escapes the body's physical limitations to enter a dimension beyond space and place. To quote Psellos' own words:

> <Auxentios> was deemed worthy even of divine revelation, <but> not like Paul, who was lifted up from earth into heaven, then in turn transported in paradise and initiated into ineffable <mysteries> (II Corinthians 12, 2–4). <For Auxentios, it was> as if his soul was released from the tyranny of the body and kept immediate company with noetic [i.e., spiritual] beings, either angels or those souls no longer <associated with> bodies (p. 79, l. 375–380).

After reflecting in a philosophical vein upon the extraordinary capacities of a blessed soul separate from a purified body, Psellos recreates Auxentios' vision:

> <Auxentios> seemed once to see the air filled with light, and, as if he were part of the scene, he observed very clearly in a vision (τῷ ὁράματι) a host of angels who were giving attention and honor to some sort of being (φύσιν τινά). It was recognizably a man by virtue of some faint semblance <to humanity>, and it emitted from itself an ineffable radiance. But <Auxentios> watched like one stricken or practically frozen, and he stood mute while the visionary <being> (τὸ δὲ φανέν) seemed to bow slightly towards the blessed man, display an intimate regard <for him>, and salute him from afar. As <Auxentios> stood wondering what this vision (τὸ θέαμα) could be and what the attendants and attention surrounding the <being he> saw <could mean>, a voice from above clearly said, 'This is the soul of the holy Symeon.' <Auxentios> saw these <marvels> and heard them; when he came back to himself (πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐπανελθυθώς), he peered out from his hut and blessed those collected <there> (p. 81, l. 401–15).

In Psellos' account, Auxentios' vision is, of course, confirmed by an earthly messenger. The episode enables Psellos to establish more than the saint's clairvoyant abilities however, for he uses it to illustrate yet another miraculous aspect of Auxentios' life upon his mountain, a place where spiritual reality could transport him beyond earthly dimensions and into a heavenly state.

Auxentios did not move whimsically from his first retreat on Oxeia in order to take up residence at his second, even more blessed site on Skopas. Both the Migne life and Psellos agree that the saint was forcibly removed from his hut on Oxeia and the hut destroyed by imperial soldiers sent at the order of the Emperor Marcian so that Marcian could consult Auxentios regarding the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon. The Migne life and Psellos disagree profoundly, however, about the place where this consultation occurred. In the Migne life, Marcian first brought Auxentios to Constantinople with the intention of persuading him to advise the Council of Chalcedon (Migne 1405 D6–1408 B2). The holy man vehemently refused, saying "Who am I, dead dog that I am, that your Majesty orders me to be numbered among the <bishops who> shepherd <the Church>? I have not been made <such> a shepherd nor do I have <theological> training" (Migne 1408 A7–11). After such a rebuff, Marcian allowed the saint to return to Bithynia, but soon summoned him once again to Constantinople, this time to confirm publicly that the Acts of the Council were in fact consistent with orthodox teaching (Migne 1408 C11–1410 A15). Psellos entirely omits the first of these encounters between the saint and the Emperor[15] and radically relocates the second from Constantinople to Chalcedon and to the very chambers of the Council, portraying Auxentios as a full participant in its activities to the astonishment of the assemblage. Psellos tells us:

> The others <at the Council> assumed that he would simply listen to their arguments, incapable of playing a role in judging or arbitrating <them> because his body was weak and overwhelmed by his intense ascetic exercises. But <Auxentios> time and again stood up against the things being said, and he surpassed the sound of the trumpet with the drum roll (κρότῳ) of his tongue. While he gave his judgments and made brilliant decisions in those judgments, the Council transcribed <them> and set forth the confirmation of the faith in what they wrote (p. 60, l. 402–410).

At the conclusion of this stunning triumph, Auxentios, now the acknowledged champion of orthodoxy and oratorical master of the assembled prelates, offered a simple excuse to the Emperor and departed for his mountain: "It is time," he said, "for me to return

[15] Ioannou (1971) 143, n. 133.

again to the place from which you yourself know you made me descend unwillingly" (p. 60, l. 448–49). This dramatic scene is a "pure invention" by Psellos,[16] and it significantly alters the historical record. With this startling innovation in the place where Auxentios influenced the Council of Chalcedon, Psellos seems to violate principle (1) of good hagiography as described above ("tell the truth"). However, we might ask with Pilate, "What is truth?" (John 18, 38). Psellos might respond that accuracy and truth are not synonymous; that in order to be true to the character and historical significance of St. Auxentios, it was necessary for him as hagiographer to place the saint at the Council of Chalcedon and to make him a fiery participant in its proceedings—inaccurate perhaps in terms of biographical and geographical reality, but true in a deeper, spiritual sense which the conscientious hagiographer must honor.

During Auxentios' absence from his mountain, both the Migne life and Psellos record his stay in two monasteries in the neighborhood of Chalcedon.[17] The first of these communities is identified by the Migne life as "the monastery in Philion," located near the Church of John (Migne 1401 C2 and 12); Psellos specifies that the monastery is situated "not far from the mountain (οὐ μακρὰν τοῦ ὄρους)" (p. 50, l. 187) and thus maintains the identification of Auxentios with his mountain already noted. The Migne life reports that the monks at this monastery, jealous of the saint's austere disciplines, mistreated him until he was relocated and properly welcomed "in <the town of> Rouphinianai at the monastery of the blessed Hypatios (ἐν τῷ μοναστηρίῳ τοῦ μακαρίου Ὑπατίου), <located> near a Church of the Holy Apostles" (Migne 1405 A7–8); Psellos repeats the substance of this narrative and characteristically expands it: "He moved <from Philion> to a nearby monastery situated not far from the mountain (οὐ πόρρω μὲν τοῦ ὄρους) facing the sea. <The monastery> is illuminated by the miracles of the martyr Hypatios, from whom it takes its name" (pp. 55–56, l. 303–6). Mindful of hagiographical recommendation (iii) and the necessity to engage the learned members of his audience, Psellos supplies an eponymous gloss upon "the blessed Hypatios" mentioned in the Migne life and makes a factual error. The monastery was named for its founder, not for the martyr.[18]

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[16] Ioannou (1971) 143, n. 134.
[17] For the location of these monasteries, see the sketch map in Ioannou (1971) 157.
[18] Ioannou (1971) 142, n. 127.

In the final period of his life upon the mountain, Auxentios endows a place with particular significance by establishing a monastery for women there. Psellos and the Migne life agree that a noble lady from the imperial court became a fervent disciple of the saint and begged him accept her into the eremitic life (Migne 1429 C 5ff.; Psellos p. 85, l. 508ff.). The Migne life notes Auxentios' initial reluctance, then specifies in geographical terms the location where he directed her to settle: "He permitted her for the time being to persist in careful study of the Holy Scriptures on the plain of Gyreta, a suburb <of Chalcedon> about a mile away" (Migne 1429 D3–6). In treating this episode Psellos does not locate the place specifically near Gyreta but rather expands more generally upon its spiritual significance. For Psellos, place symbolizes the quality of the spiritual disciplines conducted there, and he describes place as an emblem of ascetic exercises. He notes that the saint initially rejected the noble lady's request for a monastery near his own retreat and continues:

> Auxentios commended her for her eagerness to imitate his <way of life> but considered its fulfillment hopeless. For this reason, he suggested that she accept <a place on> the plain instead of <on> Mt. Skopas and choose the prudent and moderate discipline which many are accustomed to undertake rather than his <way of life, which was> sheer, steep and accessible to only a few—pathless and untrodden, so to speak. She, however, obedient to <Auxentios> in other respects, in this only could not be persuaded (p. 86, l. 525–532).

Auxentios finally relented in the face of her persistence: "He settled <her> in an undesirable spot (ἐπί τινος φαύλης κατοικίζει καταγωγῆς) somewhere on the opposite flank of the mountain and provided her with rules for ascetic life (κανόνας τοῦ ἀσκητικοῦ βίου)" (p. 86, l. 536–38). Both narratives next record the spontaneous formation of a small female community around her; this community soon received spiritual direction and protection from Auxentios (Migne 1429 D6–1436 A15; Psellos p. 86, l. 539–553). In the Migne life, Auxentios gives detailed instructions to the holy women, then leads a festal procession of local people "to the ascetic house he founded (ἐληλύθει ἐν τῷ κτιζομένῳ ἀσκητηρίῳ)" (Migne 1436 B5). Psellos agrees that the saint emerged from his hut and led a jubilant village procession to this same place, but he describes it quite differently (p. 87, l. 554–595). Noting the saint's prayer upon arrival, Psellos continues, "He then traced the outline of the monastery which would be built for <the women> (διαγράψας τὸ οἰκοδομηθησόμενον αὐταῖς

μοναστήριον) and was himself the first to lay the foundation, placing a stone in the trench" (p. 89, l. 604–7). This short but dramatic scene reflects the building procedures associated with other saints like Nikon, Ioannikios, Symeon the Younger and Lazaros of Galesion.[19] Psellos uses this *topos* to associate Auxentios emphatically not only with the place but also with the very walls of the women's monastery under his protection; only after establishing this special relationship between place and saint does Psellos go on to relate in some detail the monastic rule given by Auxentios to the women (p. 89, l. 610–656).

According to both narratives, the saint died shortly after visiting the site of the women's monastery (Migne 1436 B6–8; Psellos p. 92, l. 665–689). His death sparked a fierce competition for possession of his body among three contending religious establishments: the monks living near the Church of the Holy Apostles at Rouphinianai, the clergy of the Church of Zacharias,[20] and the women of the monastery at Gyreta. The Migne life describes a heated argument and says of its final resolution:

> The women who had been gathered together by <Auxentios> begged the assemblage with many tears not to separate their father from his children. Then, because God favored the salvation of <those> in that place, they <agreed to> deposit <his body> in the oratory which he had founded (ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ κτισθέντι εὐκτηρίῳ εἰς τάξιν μοναστηρίου). There his tomb (τὸ μνῆμα) continues up to our time to effect healings through the manifold love of Christ for mankind (Migne 1436 C4–12).

The Migne life stresses the benefits of Auxentios' tomb for the monastic establishment that gained possession of it. Psellos, on the other hand, reports and emphasizes the final scene of the debate and its eventual consequences somewhat differently:

> <The male claimants> were triumphing over the holy party of women for whom <Auxentios> had ordained a rule <of> monastic life. Then the women were emboldened to take the role of men and began to raise an opposing argument, saying that it was not right for <Auxentios>

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[19] Ousterhout (1999) discusses this topic fully in chapter 3, "Drawing the Line and Knowing the Ropes" pp. 58–64. I am grateful to Denis Sullivan for this reference.

[20] The Migne life states that the Church of Zacharias was located some distance away in the district of Theatrodes (ὡς ἀπὸ σημείων ἐν κτήματι λεγομένῳ Θεατρῴδει 1436 C3–4). Ioannou identifies this church as the probable source of clergy to serve the women's monastery at Gyreta; see Ioannou (1971) 149, n. 225.

> to forsake the mountain (τὸ ὄρος) upon which he made the beginnings of his ascetic life and brought <it> to an end. This argument prevailed in the vote, with God as both judge and arbitrator, and the place (τόπος) of <Auxentios'> ascetic life became both the evidence of his sanctity and the treasure house of his body (μαρτύριόν τε τῆς ἁγιότητος καὶ θησαυρὸς τοῦ σώματος) (p. 94, l. 708–716).

In this final scene of the Life of Auxentios, Psellos continues the identification of man with mountain that marked his presentation of earlier episodes in Auxentios' career and stresses the importance of place (τόπος) rather than of institutions as the focus of Auxentios' witness through time. Psellos concludes his narrative with Auxentios still powerfully present upon the holy mountain, for "His life," says Psellos, "proclaims loudly also his miracles, not only the ones he performed in earlier times, but also <the ones> which now flow forth freely upon those who crave them" (p. 94, l. 722–24).

A TWIST OF PLOT: PSELLUS, HELIODORUS AND NARRATOLOGY

Christopher A. McLaren

> To interpret a text is not to give it a (more or less justified, more or less free) meaning, but on the contrary to appreciate what *plural* constitutes it. Let us first posit the image of a triumphant plural, unimpoverished by any constraint of representation (of imitation). In this ideal text, the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend *as far as the eye can reach*, they are indeterminable (meaning here is never subject to a principle of determination, unless by throwing the dice).
>
> Roland Barthes, *S/Z*[1]

The first substantial critical engagement with the narrative structure of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* in the Western tradition is found in an essay by Michael Psellos transmitted under the heading Τίς ἡ διάκρισις τῶν συγγραμμάτων, ὧν τῷ μὲν Χαρίκλεια, τῷ δὲ Λευκίππη ὑποθέσεις καθεστήκατον;[2] I emphasize that Psellos' novelty consists mainly in his attention to and concern with narrative structure. Prior to him we do have, for example, Photios' ninth-century summary and analysis of Heliodorus in the *Bibliotheka*, along with references to it in his summaries of Iamblichus, Achilles Tatius and Antonius Diogenes. Nowhere, however, does Photios display any particular concern with plot per se. The one place where he does apparently characterize the plot structure as a whole is in connection with his appraisal of Achilles Tatius, where he simply states that, in the case of these two novels, there is 'a great deal of similarity in the arrangement and formation of their narratives', but the names of the characters are

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[1] Barthes (1983) 5f.

[2] "What is the difference between the compositions which have Charicleia and Leucippe as their respective subjects?"

different and Achilles Tatius is obscene.[3] Plot here can only be understood as narrative content—each novel deals with the erotic adventures and eventual union or reunion of a pair of young, beautiful, heterosexual lovers. On the other hand, as we will see in the case of Psellos, the plots of Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius will be strongly contrasted with each other when analyzed on the level of narrative form, the particular structure that is given to the narration of the couple's travails.

Though it is advertised as a *diakrisis*, or contrast, the essay in fact belongs, at least loosely, to the sub-genre of *sunkrisis*, or comparison, the archetype of which is the contest between Aeschylus and Euripides in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, and which evolves into a fairly regular feature of later rhetorical and, to a lesser extent, literary analyses. The comparison between the *Aethiopica* and *Leucippe and Clitophon* takes place on two distinct levels—on the level of moral propriety, in regard to which the *Aethiopica* is vigorously defended while *Leucippe and Clitophon* is quite strongly criticized, and on the level of discourse, where the balance is more even, though the *Aethiopica* finds slightly more favor. On the level of discourse, in conformity with the fundamentally rhetorical orientation of the genre and Psellos' own dominant interests, the analysis is primarily concerned with the twin Aristotelian categories of diction and thought, *lexis* or *phrasis* on the one hand and *dianoia* on the other. Elements of composition are correspondingly, in the rhetorical mode, generally (as with Photios) handled on the level of the colon or period. On one occasion, however, Psellos, almost in an aside, turns his attention to the overall plot-structure of the *Aethiopica*. At this point he shifts away from the strictures of normative rhetoric and seems to begin to think about the text before him in a more literary mode. At this point, too, his critique begins to do something very interesting:

> ἥρμοσται δὲ πάνυ χαριέντως καὶ ἐννοίαις παραδόξοις καὶ συντόμοις ἐψύχωται, ᾠκονόμηται δὲ κατὰ τὰς Ἰσοκράτους καὶ Δημοσθένους τέχνας. πόρρωθέν τε γὰρ τὸ ὑποτρέχον διοικούμενον φαίνεται καὶ τὸ ἀντιπῖπτον εὐθὺς πρὸς τοῦτο ἐπαναδίδοται. ὅ γέ τοι πρώτως ἀναγινώσκων ἐκ περιττοῦ τὰ πολλὰ κεῖσθαι οἰόμενος, προϊόντος τοῦ λόγου, τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ συγγεγραφότος θαυμάσεται· καὶ αὐτὴ δὲ ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ συγγράμματος ἔοικε τοῖς ἑλικτοῖς ὄφεσι· οὗτοι τε γὰρ τὴν κεφαλὴν

[3] Photius, *Bibl.* 73; cf. *Aethiopica* 362: πολλὴν δὲ ὁμοιότητα ἐν τῇ διασκευῇ καὶ πλάσει τῶν διηγημάτων.

εἴσω τῆς σπείρας κατακαλύψαντες, τὸ λοιπὸν σῶμα προβέβληνται, καὶ τὸ βιβλίον τὴν τῆς ὑποθέσεως εἰσβολὴν ἐν μέσῳ διολισθήσασαν ὥσπερ κληρωσάμενον ἀρχὴν πεποίηται τὴν μεσότητα.[4]

It has been put together in an exceedingly charming manner and animated with paradoxical and pithy thoughts, it is ordered according to the techniques of Isocrates and Desmosthenes. For its irruptive character seems, from a distance, thoroughly ordered and its [apparent] discordance is at once transferred over to this [order]. The reader, then, thinking, at least at first, that much has been set forth superfluously will, as the narrative progresses, be amazed at the composer's economy. And the composition's beginning itself is like coiled snakes. For they hide their heads away within their coils and put forth the other parts of their bodies. Just so the book, allotting itself, as it were, a narrative opening that has slipped away into the middle, makes a beginning of its mid-section.

The opening sentence introduces the topic of composition with what is, for Psellos, exceptional, indeed almost the highest, praise—comparison to the *technai* of Isocrates and Demosthenes. Here, of course, Psellos still has in mind composition on the scale of the clause and the sentence and the main issue is strictly lexical, basically the ornamental and symmetrical arrangement of syllables.[5] In the next sentence, however, it is clear, despite the superficially explanatory *gar*, that we move to an entirely distinct type of compositional analysis. We are now working on the level of narrative. The object of Psellos' inquiry is no longer the formal aspects of Heliodorus' diction but the formal structure of the narrative that that diction exists to construct.

Unfortunately, at just this point Psellos' language presents some serious, perhaps irresolvable, impediments to an adequate understanding. The most obvious difficulties lie in determining the exact meanings of *to hypotrechon* and *to antipipton*, and the proper referent for *touto*. There may be problems with the text. Hans Gärtner, in his seminal 1969 article "Charikleia in Byzanz", does not attempt a translation per se, but offers a more interpretive paraphrase along

[4] *Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius* 18–28, *Aethiopica* 364.

[5] In a similar vein Photius informs us, in a passage which may, with its mention of *paradoxa*, have influenced Psellos to some extent, that "it abounds in the unadorned (*apheleia*) and the sweet (*glukutês*) . . . it has made full use of distinct and clear diction and even if, as is likely, it leans to the figurative, it is still distinct and sets forth the matter at hand vividly. Its sentences are balanced and restrained, tending to brevity, and the composition, as in other respects, is analagous to the diction." (Photius, *Bibl.* 73; cf. *Aethiopica* 361).

these same lines, which I translate as follows: "It turns out that the apparent superfluity, from a broader perspective part of the author's plan, does indeed have a meaningful connection, such that even the type of apparitions which seem to conflict with the principle of a plausible ordering, become, in retrospect, subordinated to this."[6] N. G. Wilson translates "For interruptions to the narrative seem to be controlled from a distance and a conflicting element is brought back in a direct line to the main story (?)"[7] The most recent treatment of the passage known to me is that of Panagiotis Agapitos. His translation is as follows: "The element interrupting the story is seen to be controlled from afar and the element following thereafter is immediately reconnected to the interruption."[8] All three of these renderings broadly agree.

Andrew Dyck, on the other hand, in his 1986 critical edition of the essay, takes issue with this rendering of the sentence, and with Gärtner's and Wilson's interpretations explicitly. His commentary argues that *to hypotrechon* and *to antipipton* are antithetical rather than parallel terms. He interprets the former in a fairly strict etymological manner as an 'under-running' or 'underlying' element and translates: "The underlying theme is seen to be controlled far ahead and any refractory element is at once reconciled to it (?)."[9] This version grants *touto* a clear referent in *to hypotrechon*, but the sense of this seems not at all what Psellos, in light of the rest of the passage, has in mind. As Wilson, Gärtner and Agapitos all realize, his main point must be that there initially appears to be an absence of strict narrative control or economy, that the discovery of any underlying organizational principle can only occur in retrospect. Thus each construes *porrôthen* with *phainetai*. Dyck's rendering, on the other hand, in taking *porrôthen* with *dioikoumenon*, seems to indicate that such an economizing principle, and its overarching relation to the rest of the text, is somehow immediately apparent ('is seen to be controlled far ahead').

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[6] Gärtner (1969) 57: "Es erweise sich, daß das anscheinend Überflüssige, vom Autor auf weite Sicht eingeplant, doch einen sinnreichen Bezug habe, daß sogar solche Erscheinungen, die dem Prinzip einer plausiblen Ordnung zu widerstreben schienen, im nachherein diesem untergeordnet würden."

[7] Wilson (1983) 175.

[8] Agapitos (1998) 134. In glossing this translation he notes that he "understand[s] *to hypotrechon* as the element which interrupts the narrative, and *to antipipton* as the element which 'falls upon' this interruption and which is 'given back to it', i.e. the delayed narrative element which follows suit and which is immediately connected to its proper place, thus clarifying *a posteriori* the narrative sequence."

[9] *Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius* 20–22 (translation p. 91; commentary p. 103).

My own translation here is, on the whole, closer to those of Wilson, Gärtner and Agapitos, but I believe that the sentence, in line with the rest of Psellos' discussion, refers more specifically to the beginning of the narrative, the way in which it opens upon and involves the reader, than either of those three allow. My suspicion is that the two prominent senses of *hypotrechein* are being merged here. The first is "to overrun, to steal over", as in Sappho's famous description of the onset of *eros* in fr. 31: αὔτικα χρῳ̂ι πῦρ ὐπαδεδρόμηκεν. In that case we would have Psellos attempting to describe the way in which the narrative suddenly 'steals over' the reader, comes over the reader all at once and seemingly from out of nowhere. This sense, I believe, is merged with the primarily astronomical significance of the verb as "run in between, intercept", a quasi-technical usage which marks the point at which a given body or orbit intersects the orbit of another body. As Agapitos notes, Psellos uses the compound in this astronomical sense in poem 13 (Westerink), where the soul's obscuring of the bright rays of the radiance of the mind is figured as an eclipse of the sun by the moon (ὑποδραμοῦσα τὸν νοητὸν φωσφόρον συνέσχεν αὐτοῦ τὰς διαυγεῖς λαμπάδας).[10] Psellos may have in mind the metaphor of the narrative structure of the *Aethiopica* as an orbit, a circular or elliptical path, and the initial moment of reading that narrative as a crossing or intersecting of that orbit. Certainly, as we will see, the notion of circularity—and the lack of a definite beginning, middle and end in the circumference of a circle—as a defining characteristic of the *Aethiopica*'s narrative structure is of fundamental importance to his overall conceptual scheme here.

Moreover, if the reading I am proposing is correct, this intersection has a cognitive or epistemological significance to it as well—it generates a metaphorical darkness, a hermeneutic obscurity which will only later be clarified, and whose particular mode of clarification is, according to Psellos, one of the most remarkable features of the way in which the novel is plotted. To push this reading of *hypotrechein* as a type of orbital intersection which generates an eclipse to its limits, it is perhaps not insignificant that Charicleia and Theagenes are consistently associated with Artemis and Apollo respectively throughout the *Aethiopica*, and that the novel concludes with the couple assuming their pre-destined roles as priestess of the moon and priest of the sun, being crowned with the 'crowns of white on brows

[10] Agapitos (1998) 134, n. 63.

of black' which the oracle at Delphi had mentioned in the prophecy that, in a significant sense, sets the story in motion. In any case, 'irrupt' seems to me the English verb which best mediates between these two main senses.

The next sentence of the passage attempts to get at the way the plot of the *Aethiopica* works by positing a hypothetical reader (*ho anagignôscôn*) and tracing his response to a sequential reading of the text. This reader will be confronted with an impression of initial excess or superfluity generated by the narrative. An excess of what? Narrative information in general, apparently. But what does it mean to say that a narrative opening—in the case of a fictional narrative, at least, the more or less absolute beginning of the story—somehow puts forth too much of itself? The reader's impression that the beginning of the text proffers too much narrative can really only rest on the judgment that it proffers too little orientation towards that narrative, that is, too little context. The narrative is excessive to the extent that it conspicuously dispenses with any indications as to how the reader is to start interpreting and categorizing its opening scenes. The opening chapter of the *Aethiopica* is—or at least was—famous and served, in the early modern period, as the classical archetype for the way in which romances were to begin for precisely this reason. In it the reader's aporetic reaction to an apparently confused excess of information is projected onto the group of bandits through whose eyes, quite literally, the scene is presented. They peer over a hill down to a beach where they gaze upon the aftermath to some sort of battle, a scene of carnage. In J. R. Morgan's translation:

> They stood on the mountainside like the audience in a theater, unable to comprehend the scene: the vanquished were there, but the victors were nowhere to be seen; the victory was unequivocal, but the spoils had not been taken, and the ship lay there by herself, crewless but otherwise intact, riding peacefully at anchor as if protected by a great force of men. But although they were at a loss to know what it all meant, they still had an eye for plunder and a quick profit. So they cast themselves in the role of victors and set off down the hillside. They had reached a point a short distance from the ship and the bodies when they found themselves confronted by a sight even more inexplicable than what they had seen before. On a rock sat a girl, a creature of such indescribable beauty that one might have taken her for a goddess . . .[11]

[11] Reardon (1989) 354.

All fictional narrative openings are inherently indeterminate, for—outside of a few broad hints provided by foreknowledge of such feature's as the work's genre or familiarity with other narratives by the same author—only the progress of a given narrative itself will work to orient a reader towards the conditions of its intended reception. As Psellos recognizes, however, a prominent feature of the *Aethiopica*'s narrative design is that it pushes the indeterminacy of the beginning to its limits, and delays the reader's eventual orientation towards itself for as long as possible. The opening of the narrative seeks to construct for itself a pure contextual vacuum, to maintain a silence about which of its features are significant *as narrative information* that calls into question the very status of the first part of the narrative as a beginning. Given this fundamental lack, any narrative information at all will strike the reader as superfluous. The bandits' *aporia* is described in these same terms, as a paradoxical conflation of excess and lack—they see vanquished but no victors, victory but no plunder, a crewless ship that must have had a great crew defending it.

And yet the reader's initial aporia, however profound, is only a temporary condition. Psellos notes that in the process of reading, *proiontos tou logou*, the narrative homogenizes itself. Both excess and lack are resolved into an ordered equilibrium. All apparent superfluity, that is, all narrative information, is gradually absorbed into the matrix of a controlled and controlling system of regulation, an *oikonomia* that allows nothing to exist outside of itself. Moreover, the fact that the text at first marked for itself the absence of this regulating principle points even more strongly, in retrospect, to its eventual manifestation and totalization. It is precisely through engineering a contrast with its initial disorder that the narrative works to reveal its profound economy. To be sure, the gradual contraction of hermeneutic gaps, what Roland Barthes has called enigmas, in the course of a chronological progression is a fundamental structural characteristic of all narrative,[12]

[12] In *S/Z* Roland Barthes analyzes this attribute under the heading of 'delay': "Truth is brushed past, avoided, lost. This accident is a structural one. In fact, the hermeneutic code has a function, the one we (with Jakobsen) attribute to the poetic code: just as rhyme (notably) structures the poem according to the expectation and desire for recurrence, so the hermeneutic terms structure the enigma according to the expectation and desire for its solution. The dynamics of the text (since it implies a truth to be deciphered) is thus paradoxical: it is a static dynamics: the problem is to *maintain* the enigma in the initial void of its answer; whereas the sentences quicken the story's 'unfolding' and cannot help but move the story along, the hermeneutic

possibly even itself a definition of plot.[13] A remarkable feature of the *Aethiopica*'s narrative, however—and this I take to be precisely the point that Psellos' analysis intends to highlight—is that it rigorously, indeed gleefully, sets about generating excess enigma and inflating the narrative space between the positing and the resolution of enigmas. It undertakes to offer up to the reader an impression of the limit-case of heterogeneity, an absolutely hopeless and irresolvable narrative disordering which pushes the reader to the brink of interpretive despair and holds him there for as long as possible, before reversing course and methodically integrating each and every seemingly disjointed action and episode into a homogeneity which is as profound and universal as its heterogeneity at first seemed to be. Gerald Sandy's 1982 study of Heliodorus makes something of the same point, and, interestingly enough, does so in terms that could almost be read as a loose paraphrase or summary of this section of Psellos' essay:

> I have used the circumstances surrounding Thisbe's death to illustrate Heliodorus's narrative economy—how he forges the most seemingly unrelated events into a tightly linked chain of interdependent occurrences . . . It is only when the *Aethiopica* is analyzed that the intense concentration of narrative components becomes evident. Because of the disruptive effect of the various inset narratives . . . readers generally get the impression of a rambling, wide-sweeping narrative. Just the opposite is true, however . . . the principal 'actors' are hovering either on the 'stage' or its immediate vicinity.[14]

Certainly I have elaborated on Psellos' brief statement a great deal here, but it does seem to me that everything I have said is latent or implicit in his analysis. To the extent that this is true, it seems

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code performs an opposite action: it must set up *delays* (obstacles, stoppages, deviations) in the flow of the discourse; its structure is essentially reactive, since it opposes the ineluctable advance of language with an organized set of stoppages; between question and answer there is a whole dilatory area whose emblem might be named 'reticence,' the rhetorical figure which interrupts the sentence, suspends it, turns it aside" (Barthes (1974) 75).

[13] Paul Ricoeur, for example, takes as his fundamental definition of emplotment "an integrating dynamism that draws a unified and complete story from a variety of incidents, in other words, that transforms this variety into a unified and complete story" or even, at its limit, "the temporal synthesis of the heterogeneous" (Ricouer (1985) 8 and 158).

[14] Sandy (1982) 35 and 38.

to me that we have here not only, as Dyck has noted,[15] a significant and original insight into the nature of the *Aethiopica*'s design—one that goes well beyond characterizing the opening as merely exemplary of *in medias res* and one that, despite the great critical interest in Heliodorus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is not restated until the twentieth century—but perhaps even an important (though not really at all influential) moment in the history of narrative theory. While other ancient narratives at times manipulate a reader's hermeneutic involvement with their development in parallel ways, the highly elaborated generation and resolution of enigma is perhaps *the* fundamental plot-dynamic in the *Aethiopica*,[16] and Psellos seems to appreciate this and take a small first step towards its theoretical explication. He recognizes in the text a distinct type of narrative organizational principle, the principle of an economy which is rigorously delayed and highlighted by contrast with its opposite, and cites it as the source of a unique kind of aesthetic response, *thauma*. It is perhaps not going too far to say that Psellos' recognition and appreciation of a delayed and dynamic narrative economizing is a new critical conception of narrative meaning and the classification of a new narrative type.

What I have in mind here may become clearer in terms of a contrast with Aristotle. In Chapter 8 of the *Poetics*, 1451a30–35, Aristotle gives his famous and profoundly influential normative definition of plot, *mythos*, as the representation of a unitary and complete *praxis*:

> χρὴ οὖν, καθάπερ καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις μιμητικαῖς ἡ μία μίμησις ἑνός ἐστιν, οὕτω καὶ τὸν μῦθον, ἐπεὶ πράξεως μίμησίς ἐστι, μιᾶς τε εἶναι καὶ ταύτης ὅλης, καὶ τὰ μέρη συνεστάναι τῶν πραγμάτων οὕτως ὥστε μετατιθεμένου τινὸς μέρους ἢ ἀφαιρουμένου διαφέρεσθαι καὶ κινεῖσθαι τὸ ὅλον· ὃ γὰρ προσὸν ἢ μὴ προσὸν μηδὲν ποιεῖ ἐπίδηλον, οὐδὲν μόριον τοῦ ὅλου ἐστίν.

[15] Dyck (1986) 103.

[16] As recognized, for example, by J. R. Morgan (and again in terms that echo those of Psellos quite closely): "The pattern recurs with sufficient frequency for us to identify it as a characteristic feature of Heliodoros' narrative technique. To reiterate, release of information is deliberately controlled so as to entice the reader into identifying and answering, with varying degrees of certainty, questions posed by the narrative. The implied reader of the *Aithiopika* is compelled to be constantly engaged in interpretation and speculation, and must respond to the author's games in order to actuate the text fully", (Morgan (1994) 105).

> And so, just as in other types of imitation a single imitation is an imitation of a single thing, so is it necessary that the plot, since it is the imitation of an action, be the imitation of a single action and one that is whole, and further, that the elements of the events be so constructed that if one element were to be reordered or removed the whole would be disrupted and disturbed. For that which makes no obvious difference by its presence or absence is no part of the whole.

Chapters 7 and 8 of the *Poetics* are, as a whole, concerned with the *sustasis*—organization or constitution—of actions in the ideal tragic plot which, according to Aristotle at the very beginning of Chapter 7, 1450b24f., is "complete, whole and of a certain magnitude (*teleia, holê, ti megethos echousê*)" As the passage quoted above indicates, the twin categories of completeness and wholeness are categories of economy. A plot-structure is complete and whole if it allows neither any excess nor lack in the sequence of actions it communicates. As D. W. Lucas notes, completeness and wholeness mean respectively that "nothing is absent which is necessary, nothing is present which is superfluous."[17] On one level this finds a parallel in Psellos' analysis of the narrative economy of the *Aethiopica*, the perfect balance that he articulates as finally being struck by the dynamic absorption of narrative excess and the filling-in of narrative lack, but the differences between the two types of economy are crucial.

Aristotle first of all, as I will discuss in some depth below, insists not only that a plot structure be profoundly economized, but that the economy which it manifests be uniform and uniformly apparent. It is a static and objective economy rather than the dynamic and subjectively realized economizing which Psellos articulates in the case of the *Aethiopica.* The type of initial readerly *aporia* that Psellos identifies as allowing this dynamic economy to manifest itself counts, for Aristotle, as a displacement of one of the constituent elements of the plot. That, for him, automatically disjoints and weakens the work's wholeness, undermining rather than strengthening its narrative economy. This judgment is a direct result of a second major distinction, namely the fact that Aristotle's mimetic model leads him to assign the criteria of unity and completeness to that which is represented, to the sequence of actions of which the *mythos* is a representation, or *mimesis.* This implies that, for Aristotle, the aesthetic potential of

[17] Lucas (1968) 111.

a given plot resides primarily in its representational content—it only needs to be allowed to let its innate completeness and wholeness shine through the language that articulates it. Psellos, on the other hand, describes an economy and through it an aesthetic which works in terms of the narrative structure on the level of discourse per se. It is not *what* sequence of actions the narrative communicates that render it complete and whole, but rather the *way in which* the narrative communicates those actions. Aesthetic potential is a question of form rather than content. We are told that it is the way in which the reader is led by the narrative to realize the *oikonomia* latent in the sequence of actions it ends up articulating that he is made to feel a sense of wonder, of *thauma*. That is to say, it is not the actions per se, but the particular form of the actions' sequence, that is the source of an aesthetic response to plot in the reader.

With this departure from strictly Aristotelian mimeticism Psellos almost seems to have stumbled into—though without, of course, theoretical reflection—a way of thinking about the nature and aesthetics of plotting which has been one of the dominant forces in twentieth-century narrative theory. Critics such as Wolfgang Iser have articulated the claim that literary meaning in general, and the meaning of narrative in particular, are no longer to be conceived of in the 'classical' mode as referential, a static object latent in the text, there to be discovered or consumed by the reader, but an effect, the sum of a set of responses on the part of the reader to a set of textual impulses which a narrative supplies. On this view reading, and literary criticism as a genre of reading, are primarily a pragmatics rather than a semantics. Literary meaning is the culmination of a temporal process, not an atemporal reality. Iser succinctly defines this process, in *The Act of Reading*, as "the transmutation of textual structures through ideational activities into personal experiences."[18] An especially important aspect of these 'ideational activities' for Iser is what he calls the 'resolution of indeterminacies.' These indeterminacies, or blanks, arise unavoidably from the fact that only a partial, limited, schematic representation of chronological reality is possible in language. Indeterminacies elicit connection and resolution, the heterogeneity of a text demands a certain degree of resolution, all of which take place in the mind of the reader in the act of reading.

[18] Iser (1980) 38.

The discovery or production of a code underlying a given text's arrangement of indeterminacies resolves those indeterminacies, logically connects juxtaposed schemata and is, for Iser, literary meaning.[19]

To this extent, at least, the imagined sequence of readerly responses described by Psellos imply, very broadly speaking, a model of reading that is pragmatic. Certainly Psellos here is much closer to Iser than he is to Aristotle. We can readily read Psellos' notion of the initial excess of the *Aethiopica* as an Iserian indeterminacy. It generates heterogeneity, it has been designed to generate a sense of indeterminacy and the desire for resolution of that indeterminacy in Psellos' ὁ ἀναγινώσκων, his Iserian implied reader. There is a further connection between the notion of meaning as effect and the sense of wonder, *thauma*, with which Psellos' reader is said eventually to regard the text's *oikonomia*. On Iser's terms we can say that this passage depicts an aesthetics of response. It locates an aesthetic effect in the interactions of reading, in the pre-structured processes of revelation (by the text) and realization (by the reader) of the *Aethiopica*'s narrative design. There is wonder for the reader in generating and experiencing the resolution of all the apparent excesses and lacks of the narrative into a narrative *oikonomia*.

* * *

The second half of the passage under consideration turns from narrative economy as a function of the role of the reader in his interaction with the *Aethiopica*'s plot to the formal qualities of the plot itself. The snake simile depicts synchronically, as an object, the narrative structure previously traced out diachronically, as the effect of a process of interaction. To that extent we have returned to the familiar ground of a fundamentally Aristotelian mode of construing narrative meaning as object, but here too Psellos seems to me to be doing something quite different, and quite innovative.

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[19] "They [blanks] indicate that the different segments of the text *are* to be connected, even though the text itself does not say so. They are the unseen joints of the text, and as they mark off schemata and textual perspectives from one another, they simultaneously trigger acts of ideation on the reader's part. Consequently, when the schemata and perspectives have been linked together, the blanks disappear . . . The blanks of the literary text . . . necessitate a connecting equivalence which will enable the reader to discover what has been called the 'Archisem' which underlies the disconnected segments and, as soon as it has been 'found', links them into a new unit of meaning." (Iser (1980) 180f.).

Both Psellos and Aristotle use organic metaphors to characterize narrative patterns in general, and specifically the notion of narrative economy. Aristotle aligns his criteria of completeness, wholeness and magnitude with the category of natural beauty shortly after the passage previously quoted in *Poetics* 7:

> ἔτι δ' ἐπεὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ ζῷον καὶ ἅπαν πρᾶγμα ὃ συνέστηκεν ἐκ τινῶν οὐ μόνον ταῦτα τεταγμένα δεῖ ἔχειν ἀλλὰ καὶ μέγεθος ὑπάρχειν μὴ τὸ τυχόν· τὸ γὰρ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἐστίν, διὸ οὔτε πάμμικρον ἄν τι γένοιτο καλὸν ζῷον (συγχεῖται γὰρ ἡ θεωρία ἐγγὺς τοῦ ἀναισθή του χρόνου γινομένη) οὔτε παμμέγεθες (οὐ γὰρ ἅμα ἡ θεωρία γίνεται ἀλλ' οἴχεται τοῖς θεωροῦσι τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ ὅλον ἐκ τῆς θεωρίας) οἷον εἰ μυρίων σταδίων εἴη ζῷον· ὥστε δεῖ καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῶν σωμάτων καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ζώων ἔχειν μὲν μέγεθος, τοῦτο δὲ εὐσύνοπτον εἶναι, οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μύθων ἔχειν μὲν μῆκος, τοῦτο δὲ εὐμνημόνευτον εἶναι.
>
> And further, since any beautiful thing—any animal and any action that is composed of parts—must not only have those parts in their proper order but also possess a scale that is other than randomly determined (for beauty lies in scale and arrangement), for this reason an animal, to be beautiful, could not be either utterly small (for the perception of it is confounded since it occurs within a virtually imperceptible time-frame) nor utterly large (for the perception of it does not occur all at once, and instead those who perceive it lose the perception of its unity and wholeness) as, for example, if there were an animal a thousand miles long. So, then, just as it is necessary in the case of bodies and of animals that there be some scale, but that this be readily comprehended, so also in the case of plots it is necessary that they possess some length, but that this be readily memorable. (1450b34–1451a6)

Here Aristotle is primarily setting out to establish an organic standard of beauty for the scale, *megethos* of the mimetic object, but there is also an explicit connection of this standard to its arrangement, *taxis*. This was discussed in the preceding paragraph (1450b21–34) under the categories of completeness and wholeness, and is discussed in the paragraph which follows this one (1451a16–35) under the category of unity. Thus *to kalon en megethei kai taxei estin*. Functionally, there is little or no difference between scale and arrangement as the two criteria of beauty in an organic body, for each is analyzed as a fundamental condition of intelligibility. A proper scale is one that renders the *taxis* of the mimetic object, the *muthos*, accessible to instantaneous synoptic perception, that is to say, allows one to recognize immediately its unity and wholeness. This wholeness entails, quite

famously, the possession of a beginning, middle and end defined as types of actions and differentiated according to their logical—probable or necessary—connections with other actions. A beginning has no necessary connection with preceding events, but does have necessary connections with that which follows it; the middle has necessary connections with both that which precedes and follows it; the ending is necessarily connected with that which precedes it, the middle, but not with anything to follow. There is, then, in terms of Aristotle's organic metaphor of scale, a discernable equivalence between a plot's logical sequence of beginning, middle and end, and the *taxis* of an organism, a living body. The obvious and implicit metaphor for *this* equivalence is beginning, middle and end of the *mythos* as head, trunk and tail.[20] This is, in fact, almost exactly what we get in Plato's *Phaedrus* 264c, in Socrates' critique of the *taxis* of Lysias' speech, a passage which may well have served as a sort of model for Aristotle here:

> Ἀλλὰ τόδε γε οἶμαί σε φάναι ἄν, δεῖν πάντα λόγον ὥσπερ ζῷον συνεστάναι σῶμά τι ἔχοντα αὐτὸν αὑτοῦ, ὥστε μήτε ἀκέφαλον εἶναι μήτε ἄπουν, ἀλλὰ μέσα τε ἔχειν καὶ ἄκρα, πρέποντα ἀλλήλοις καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ γεγραμμένα.
>
> But I think you would agree to this—it is necessary that every speech be constructed with its own particular body, just like an animal, so that it lacks neither head nor feet, but possesses a trunk and appendages, written so as to be fitted to each other and to the whole. (264c2–5)

In this context the body of a snake as a metaphor for a plot structure has some profound implications. The snake is an organism that almost effaces any internal distinction between its beginning, middle and end—its head, trunk and tail. At the very least it renders this distinction almost non-existent in comparison with almost all other animal bodies. It is about as close as biological *taxis* can come, on the macroscopic level, to homogeneity, to a body type which blurs any immediately apparent functional division between its parts. This,

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[20] Psellos himself uses an only slightly altered version of this metaphorical equivalence in his poem *On Rhetoric*: Ὁ κατὰ τέχνην, δέσποτα, συντεθειμένος λόγος / ἔχει καὶ σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ κεφαλὴν καὶ πόδας / ψυχὴ μὲν ἡ διάνοια, σῶμα δ' ἐστὶν ἡ λέξις / κεφαλὴ τὰ προοίμια, ἐπίλογος οἱ πόδες. [A speech composed artfully, my Lord, possesses both a body and a soul and a head and feet. Its soul is its thoughts, its body is its language, its head its prologue, its feet its conclusion.] (*Poem.* 7.83–86).

however, is a fundamental requirement of Plato's and Aristotle's metaphors. For both of them, an organic model for discourse works precisely to the extent that a body, at least when of a proper scale, offers to perception an immediately apparent set of functional distinctions in its *taxis*. It has to show openly what is its head, what its trunk, what its feet or tail. In the case of a snake we can, of course, recognize a head, and the point at which the body ends, but the rest of its body resolves itself into an almost pure linearity which makes any attempt to distinguish the internal points between head and trunk, and trunk and tail, basically meaningless.

This indeterminacy inherent in the anatomy of a snake is transformed by Psellos into an element of the indeterminacy of the *taxis* of the *Aethiopica*. It is a metaphorical description of a certain type of enigmatic narrative structure, a type of contextual indeterminacy which works against a perception of what serve as the points of transition between its beginning, middle and end. The particular features of the serpentine body seem to have been chosen to characterize this text as a type of narrative which at first prevents and delays a reader from coming to an understanding of these points of transition which, for both Plato and Aristotle, are fundamental to the conception of an ordered *muthos*.

But this only starts to get at the connotations of the snake simile. Psellos' main point lies in his specification that the snake is knotted and folded in on itself, and that it hides its head away within its coils. This works to render an already enigmatic *taxis* even more unintelligible. A second peculiarity of anatomy comes into play here—the body of a snake is formally elastic, it can assume a range of configurations, present a range of profiles, from perfectly linear to perfectly circular. Once again we are dealing with levels of determinacy, levels of intelligibility, and the exact terms of the simile show just how hard Psellos is pushing to characterize the *Aethiopica* as a text that takes various types of narrative indeterminacies to their limits.

The image characterizes the *Aethiopica* as a story which displaces its beginning. This structural displacement is the synchronic equivalent of the diachronic notion of a complete initial lack of contextualizing information that I discussed in conjunction with the first part of the passage. The snake wrapped around its own head is a figure that describes the structure of a hermeneutic moment. It is the shape of the same enigma—narrative superfluity—that is the first

term in what Psellos characterizes as the *Aethiopica*'s method of dynamic economizing. The snake's head, the narrative beginning, lies behind and between the coils of its body, the narrative's mid-section, not to one side of it in an irreversible linear and logical progression. In this structure the single differentiated element of the textual body is not available to perception. Rather, as Psellos describes it, the plot confronts the reader as a confused mass of apparently identical, overlapping narrative segments. From a synchronic perspective there is no obvious, authoritative entrance to the narrative situation, no *archê* that is marked as a meaningful starting point to an intelligible story.

In Platonic and Aristotelian terms this sort of body, seemingly not ordered according to a logical and organic teleology, can only be monstrous, a sort of chimaera.[21] Psellos, on the other hand, uses this image to get at what he sees as the beauty of the *Aethiopica*, its aesthetic potential. From his critical stance the slippage of the narrative's constituent elements generates not a monstrosity but a species of corporeal disorder which functions, at the same time as part of an integral, organic schema. The indeterminacy which the coiling of the snake's body and the displacement of its head generates are here seen as the very conditions for experiencing *to kalon* in this narrative, for it is the same indeterminacy which Psellos analyzed earlier as the foil in opposition to which the reader receives, in progressing through the narrative and resolving its enigmas, an intensified perception of its narrative economy. Reading the *Aethiopica* is like watching a snake uncoil itself, watching a seemingly impossible tangle of coils straighten itself out. At the end of the novel, the snake has completed the process of slowly unwinding and unraveling itself and displays openly the beauty of its form.

In this, once again, Psellos seems to anticipate a basic tenet of twentieth-century critical approaches to narrative. His implicit dualistic articulation of narrative chronology, represented in the conceptual opposition between the coiled and uncoiled bodies of the snake, corresponds to a distinction first proposed in 1921 by Victor Shklovsky,

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[21] Note here Plato's evocation of a number of monstrously ordered creatures—Hippocentaurs, Chimaeras, Gorgons, Pegasuses and especially Thyphoeus, Hesiod's creature of a hundred snake-heads—at the beginning of the *Phaedrus* as images of the disordered soul, and by extension of the disordered discourse, against which the organic discursive metaphor at 264c is at least partially framed. For a detailed and insightful reading of the importance of this imagery to the *Phaedrus* as a whole see Nightingale (1995) ch. 4, esp. 134f.

one of the founders of the Russian Formalist school of criticism. This is the conceptual division of any narrative into a *fabula* and a *syuzhet*, loosely, a story-line and a plot. The elaboration of these two terms is part of Shklovsky's project of defining art through a series of antitheses with everyday life, *byt*.[22] In linguistic art, in literature, this same dichotomy is expressed as an antithesis between poetic language and practical language. Art, for Shklovsky, is precisely that which opposes itself to life, that which, through an array of devices, 'makes strange' (*ostranit'*) the material, the objects and images, of banal existence through a process of defamiliarization and recontextualization in the artistic.[23]

The distinction between *fabula* and *syuzhet* is a sub-species of this more pervasive divorce between life and art. As *byt* is conceived of as the material to which art in general applies its various devices in order to resurrect our perception of it, so *fabula* is the irreversible, linear, causally motivated temporality of everyday existence which serves as material for manipulation by *syuzhet*. *Fabula* is the narrative chronology of life, *syuzhet* is the narrative chronology of art, reversible, non-linear and teleologically or formally motivated, a device for complicating and thereby enhancing our perception of time and chronology in fiction.

One of Shklovsky's earliest discussions of these two notions appears in his *Theory of Prose*, in a chapter on Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*. Very near the beginning of the essay one encounters this familiar-sounding line of analysis:

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[22] Roman Jakobsen, in a study of the Futurist poetry of Vladimir Majakovskij first published in 1931, elaborates on the conflict between creativity and inertia in his poetry and there defines *byt* as "the stabilizing force of an immutable present, overlaid, as this present is, by a stagnating slime, which stifles life in its tight, hard mold." (Jakobsen (1987) 277; cf. Steiner (1984) 48n).

[23] *Ostraniene* (noun) and *ostranit'* (verb) are neologisms, coined by Shklovsky himself, playing on the familiar Russian verb *otstranit'* (estrange). Lemon and Reis, in their 1965 anthology *Russian Formalist Criticism*, translate these terms as 'defamiliarization' and 'defamiliarize'. Benjamin Sher, in his translation of Shlovsky's *Theory of Prose* coins 'enstrangement' and 'enstrange'. See his translator's introduction, (Shklovsky (1990) pp. xviii–xix) for a discussion of these terms, their meaning and their translations. In *Art as Device* Shklovsky emphasizes the importance of *ostraniene* as one of the fundamental principles of all art: "The purpose of art, then, is to lead us to a knowledge of a thing through the organ of sight instead of recognition. By 'enstranging' objects and complicating form, the device of art makes perception long and 'laborious.' The perceptual process in art has a purpose all its own and ought to be extended to the fullest. *Art is a means of experiencing the process of creativity. The artifact itself is quite unimportant.*" [italics his] (Shklovsky (1990) 6).

> Upon first picking up Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, we are overwhelmed by a sense of chaos. The action constantly breaks off, the author constantly returns to the beginning or leaps forward. The main plot, not immediately accessible, is constantly interrupted by dozens of pages filled with whimsical deliberations on the influence of a person's nose or name on his character or else with discussions of fortifications . . . But when you examine the structure of the book more closely, you perceive first of all that this disorder is intentional. There is method to Sterne's madness. It is as regular as a painting by Picasso.[24]

The parallelism with Psellos to this point in Shklovsky's analysis is remarkable and needs no detailed exposition: a reader's initial impression of chaos generated by excess material that has no discernable context (*ek perissou keisthai*); a narrative that seems to break in, break off and interrupt itself (*to hypotrechon, to antipipton*), but which eventually yields an underlying, and aesthetically gratifying sense of method and regularity (*oikonomia, thauma*); a displacement and rearrangement of the narrative's various parts (*diolisthêsasan*). As with Psellos on the *Aethiopica*, Shklovsky on *Tristram Shandy* sees the estrangement and reconciliation which these various narrative devices generate—all of which can be characterized as one or another way of exaggerating and highlighting of disjunction or conflict between story-line and plot—as the principle source of aesthetic gratification for the reader of narrative fiction.

I have argued that in Psellos' analysis of the narrative structure of the *Aethiopica* one can discern an inherent recognition of the presence, importance, sophistication and remarkable aesthetic effect achieved by the manipulation of the story-line/plot dichotomy on the part of Heliodorus. To that extent, Psellos' commentary on the *Aethiopica* foreshadows, if only for a moment, a more-or-less formalist methodology and reveals a more-or-less formalist literary sensibility. The notion of narrative *oikonomia* and the dualistic chronological schema of the snake simile both assert the primacy of form over content, of device over material, and argue for an aesthetics grounded in the process of revelation of that form, those devices, to the reader.[25]

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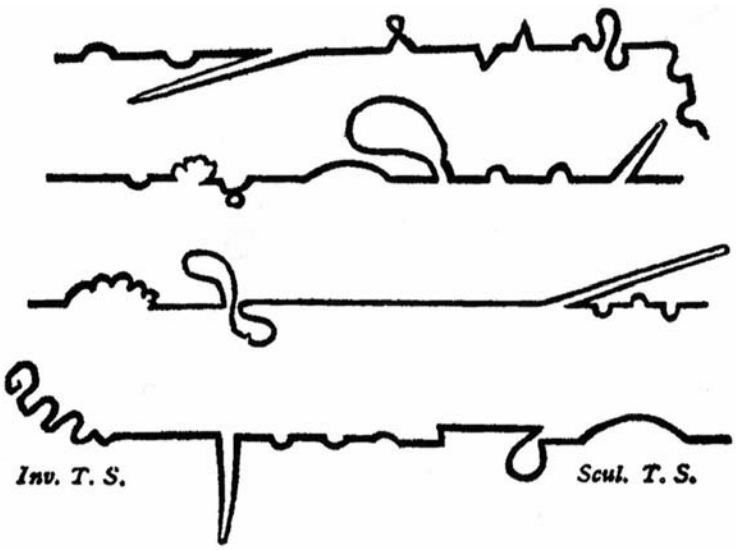
[24] Shklovsky (1990) 147f.

[25] Shklovsky's particular brand of formalism is, of course, far from the last word in twentieth-century narratology, and his general notions of material and device were subject to attack very soon after their appearance (see, for example, Bakhtin and Medvedev (1985) 114f.). The more specific dichotomy between *fabula* and *syuzhet*,

I will close by pointing to one final parallel. Both Psellos on the *Aethiopica* and Shklovsky on *Tristram Shandy* articulate the distinction between story-line and plot in schematic form, in the contrast between straight and twisted lines. At the very end of his essay, Shklovsky fixes upon Sterne's own figurative representation of the complicated plot-lines of *Tristram Shandy* in Volume VI, ch. XL, as a definitive novelistic example of the laying-bare of conventional notions of narrative progression:



Sterne describes these four figures as respectively "the four lines I moved in through my first, second, third and fourth volumes" before describing the line of the fifth and his progress to this point in his current volume, the sixth. He goes on to communicate his hopes for the future of his work:

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on the other hand, has generally withstood the test of time and indeed became central to structural narratology, the twentieth century's most influential school of narrative criticism, under the guise of the now commonplace dichotomy between *histoire* and *discours*. It is in fact no exaggeration to state that the dualistic conception of narrative chronology inherent in the *fabula/syuzhet* distinction is fundamental to the majority of recent and contemporary theoretical treatments of narrative, and particularly novelistic, fiction. For the continuing relevance of the concepts and terminology of *fabula* and *syuzhet* see, for example, Brooks (1992) 13f. The seminal analysis of *histoire* and *discours* in structural narratology is Todorov (1966).

> If I mend at this rate it is not impossible—by the good leave of his grace of *Benevento*'s devils—but I may arrive hereafter at the excellency of going on even thus;
>
> ---
>
> which is a line drawn as straight as I could draw it, by a writing-master's ruler borrowed for that purpose) turning neither to the right hand or to the left.[26]

Sterne's schematics here are a candid, parodic exposition of a conventionally hidden dynamic, here the manipulation of uni-directional, linear temporality by a regressive and digressive novelistic chronology, something like that which Psellos finds and admires in the *Aethiopica* and expresses through the brilliantly realized simile of the coiled snake whose ultimate linearity awaits the reader's conceptual unwinding. *Tristram Shandy* not only complicates narrative ordering and its own internal chronology to an unprecedented degree, it also states clearly to the reader that it is doing so and how it is doing so. It is for precisely this reason that Shklovsky finds it to be such an important locus for the discussion of *fabula* and *syuzhet* with which the essay closes:

> The concept of *syuzhet* is too often confused with a description of the events in the novel, with what I'd tentatively call the *fabula*. As a matter of fact, though, the story line is nothing more than material for plot formation . . . The forms of art are explained by the artistic laws that govern them and not by comparisons with actual life. In order to impede the action of the novel, the artist resorts not to witches and magic potions but to a simple transposition of its parts. He thereby reveals to us the aesthetic laws that underlie both of these compositional devices [story-line and plot]. It is common practice to assert that *Tristram Shandy* is not a novel. Those who speak in this way regard opera alone as true music, while a symphony for them is mere chaos. Tristram Shandy is the most typical novel in world literature.[27]

To the extent that the *Aethiopica* is plotted in the way it is in order to undertake this same process of revealing the structural principles which make its plot so aesthetically and hermeneutically pleasing, we can perhaps hereby take a step toward restoring it to the status it had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as, in Pierre-Daniel Huet's judgment, the fountain-head of all subsequent romances, in

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[26] Sterne (1965) 359f. By permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.
[27] Shklovsky (1990) 170.

its own way 'the most typical novel in world literature'. To the extent that Psellos at least begins to recognize and attempts to formulate a critical response which articulates the 'artistic laws which underlie its compositional devices,' we can perhaps claim for him the status of the first reader of the *Aethiopica* to point out how that might be true.

ANIMATE STATUES: AESTHETICS AND MOVEMENT*

Stratis Papaioannou

In memory of Jakov Ljubarskij (1929–2003)

στῆθί μοι ἐν τῇ τοῦ σοῦ ὄρους ἀκρότητι ἔμψυχος ἀνδριὰς καὶ σφυρήλατος, κύκλωσε περιάγων τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν καὶ πάντας περιλάμπων τῷ βλέμματι

"Stand for me at the peak of your mountain, an animate statue and an object wrought, leading your eye around and encompassing everyone with your shining gaze."[1] With these words, Michael Psellos addresses the emperor Constantine Monomachos in an enkomion performed for the ruler.[2] That Monomachos is presented here as a statue is not an unusual image of Psellan rhetoric and, for that matter, Greek rhetoric. Neither is Psellos's assertion uncommon that Monomachos's statue is animate, capturing an entire audience by its moving gaze. Psellos appropriates a prevalent premodern Greek metaphor in depicting whomever he wishes to idealize or appease as a "statue," in Greek, *agalma* or occasionally, as in the cited phrase, *andrias*. Similarly following a long tradition, Psellos often imagines such a statue as alive and moving, animate, *empsychos*.[3]

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[1] *Orat. pan.* 6.247–250. Dennis edits "κύκλῳ σε" but see Hörandner (2002) 154, where "κυκλωσε" is opted as being closer to the Byzantine idiom. This and all other translations are my own.

[2] George Dennis dates the oration to *c.* 1045–1050 with the suggestion that it was performed on the feast of Epiphany celebrated on the sixth of January; the speech was an annual event (*cf.* lines 340–343) on which cf. Morris (1995) 70–71.

[3] For the statue metaphor and animation in archaic and classical literature see Frontisi-Ducroux (1975), Vernant (1990), Faraone (1992), Morris (1992) and, recently, Steiner (2001). For Psellos's frequent reference to statues and animation see e.g. *Poem.* 17.301–303, *Orat. pan.* 4.492–495 and 18.74–75, *Enc. in mat.* 190–191 and

The image, with its long tradition, materializes a common human fantasy, the desire and, often, the fear to discover life and movement in humanly created objects.[4] Indeed, the image and its underlying concept seem so common that Psellos's metaphor might appear too conventional to deserve a second glance. There is, however, a density of references and a vitality of meanings that the Psellan metaphor conceals. To revive the metaphor is to revive the dialogue between the various texts, authors, ideas, and cultural contexts, that constitutes it. Such a reading is what wish to I offer in what follows.

My examination is focused on two moments in the history of the animate statue metaphor, a history which is part of a larger framework, the history of premodern aesthetics. First, I outline the conceptualization of statues and animation that was fundamentally influential for Byzantine discourse, namely the late antique use of the metaphor. In particular, I look at how the metaphor of the statue and the concept of animation are employed and elaborated by Psellos's two most frequently cited and discussed authors, Gregory of Nazianzos and the Athenian Neoplatonist Proclus.[5] Second, I reconstruct animate statues and their meaning in the writings of Psellos, looking at the variety of ways in which Psellos alters and subverts his tradition.

What separates the late antique and the Psellan views on statues and animation and what makes Psellos's repeated references to statues intriguing is the fact that after the seventh century freestanding sculpture began to gradually disappear from Byzantine culture. Statues remain visible to the Byzantine beholder as traces of Byzantium's late-antique past, but *new* statues are not created.[6] More importantly, statues no longer perform the functions, either commemorative, votive, or religious, that they once did; these functions are now primarily fulfilled by iconography.[7] Yet, while statues as material objects are

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902–906, *Chron.* I.36.3–7, III.20.1–9, VI.125.1–3, *Hist. syntomos* 94.5, *Letter* 3 to Romanos Diogenes (Sathas) 225.10–11, *Letter* 57 to Neokaisarites (Kurtz and Drexl) 90.3, *Letter* 136 to the *metropolites* of Amaseia (Kurtz and Drexl) 162.14.

[4] See Gross (1992) as well as Kris and Kurz (1979).

[5] Psellos lectured frequently on Gregory of Nazianzos, whom he interpreted by repeated references to Proclus and Neoplatonic theology; see *Theol.* I *passim*.

[6] See Mango (1986) and Bouras (1991).

[7] See Mango (1963), James (1996), Kazhdan (1999) 308–313, and Saradi (2000). The notion of the animate icon discussed by Charles Barber in this volume is a good example of icons replacing statues in the Byzantine intellectual imagination;

gradually (though not entirely) replaced by icons with respect to their function, they continue to exist within Byzantine texts as metaphors with discursive roles. Psellos, as I wish to argue, marks a significant peak in the continuity of this textual function. For Psellos uses animate statues as the primary metaphor for expressing his appreciation of aesthetic appearance and aesthetic movement. The word 'aesthetic' is used here in its literal meaning, denoting what is exterior and available to the senses. The valuation of what is aesthetic is Psellos's contribution within the history of theories *about* the function, value, or non-value of exterior appearance. Psellos's use of the animate statue encapsulates this contribution.[8]

Presence and the Late Antique Theological Aesthetics

In his enkomion of the martyr Cyprian, Gregory of Nazianzus offers the following description of a beautiful virgin, an exemplar, as Gregory shows (*Orat.* 24.9):

> Παρθένος τις ἦν τῶν εὐπατρίδων, καὶ κοσμίων, Ἀκούετε, παρθένοι, καὶ συναγάλλεσθε, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ ζυγὸν ὅσαι σώφρονές τε καὶ φιλοσώφρονες· κοινὸν γὰρ ἀμφοτέραις καλλώπισμα τὸ διήγημα. Καὶ ἡ παρθένος καλὴ τῷ εἴδει σφόδρα· προσᾴδέτω ταύτῃ μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεῖος Δαβὶδ, Πᾶσα ἡ δόξα, λέγων, τῆς θυγατρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως ἔσωθεν, νύμφη Χριστοῦ γνησία, κάλλος ἀπόθετον, ἄγαλμα ἔμψυχον, ἀνάθημα ἄσυλον, τέμενος ἀνεπίβατον, κῆπος κεκλεισμένος, πηγὴ ἐσφραγισμένη (προσᾴδέτω γάρ τι καὶ Σολομὼν), μόνῳ Χριστῷ τηρουμένη.
>
> There was a virgin of noble birth and decent behavior. Listen, and rejoice with her, o virgins and, even more so, you who, while under the yoke, are self-mastered or lovers of self-mastery; my narrative is an ornament common for both of you. The virgin was extremely beautiful in her form; on her behalf, let divine David sing with us that

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see further Barasch (1992) and Belting (1994). The supposed total absence of statues from Byzantine culture has led to serious misconceptions of Byzantium as an "oriental" culture; see, e.g., Beutler (1982).

[8] In what follows I focus mainly on Psellos. In Papaioannou (2006a and *in preparation*), Psellos is placed within a wider tradition of discussions of form and the metaphorics of statue. It should be noted that Psellos appears to have been a collector of ancient statues (see *Letter* 141 to the *krites* of Hellas (Sathas) 383), thus being, as it were, a proto-archaeologist.

> 'all the glory of the daughter of the king is within' [*Ps.* 44.14], a genuine bride of Christ, a beauty hidden, a statue animate, an offering inviolable, a temple unassailable, a garden closed, 'a fountain sealed' [*Cant.* 4.12] (let Solomon add something to the song), only by Christ preserved.

The ideal virgin is imagined here as a "statue animate." What does Gregory mean with this metaphor? As the context suggests, Gregory regards this virgin as a model of beauty and virtue. These two qualities are indistinguishable from one another; for the beauty that the virgin displays is located *within* (*esôthen*), it arises from her virtues, her self-mastery and her connection to Christ. It is this paradoxical meeting of interior virtue with beauty, a word that denotes aesthetic value, that the metaphor "statue animate" expresses. Like a statue, the virgin can function as an exemplar that can be seen, talked about, admired, imitated. As an *animate* statue, this exemplar is alive, full of the presence of god and virtue. Her "statue," that is, has an appearance—it offers an image and a narrative—but it is not a mere artistic object, an blank surface, hollow within. This is a paradoxical aesthetic object: its aesthetics is a manifestation of what lies within, its beauty is *hidden*.

This meaning of the animate statue metaphor, as an expression of a paradoxical aesthetics according to which appearance is valued not in itself but in as much as it exemplifies and reveals interiority, is corroborated further by Gregory's references to statues and animation in his other writings. Let us look at the two parts of the metaphor separately, beginning with statues and reading two characteristic examples. In his *Funeral Oration on his Father*, Gregory claims that his father "tamed people's character and manners . . . through discourses of pastoral science and by presenting himself as a model, like a spiritual statue [ὥσπερ ἀνδριάντα πνευματικόν], that is fashioned into beauty stemming from his every perfect deed" (*Orat.* 18.16). Similarly, in his *First Theological Oration*, Gregory imagines the exemplary theologian as a product of statue-fashioning: "Having removed what is foreign to discourse . . . let us look at ourselves and fashion the theologian into beauty, as if sculpting a statue [ὥσπερ ἀνδριάντα]" (*Orat.* 27.7). Sculpting a statue functions in these two passages as a metaphor for producing a new kind of beauty. As inferred from these two orations, this beauty is produced by removing *mere* exteriority. Gregory speaks about the transcendence of visible things (*Orat.* 18.1), the neglect of the deceitful and disorderly material world (*Orat.*

18.3), the purification of body and mind for the meeting of human mind, now "naked," with the divine intellect (*Orat.* 18.4; *Orat.* 27.3), as well as the distrust for artistic discourse (*Orat.* 18.16 and 18; *Orat.* 27 *passim*). Instead of mere exteriority, the ideal man, who is sculpted through virtue, becomes full of God's presence (cf. *Orat.* 18.1); he "breaths God" (*Orat.* 27.4) and is "moved by God" (*Orat.* 18.2). Divine presence and interior movement is what this "sculpted" man manifests.

In using the metaphor of sculpting in such a manner, Gregory is appropriating a Platonic philosophical image that was current in late antique philosophy. It is Plotinus, for instance, who in a notorious passage of the *Enneads* (1.6.9.7–15) urges his philosophical reader to fashion himself as an *agalma*, "like a creator of a statue that is to become beautiful, who removes one part, polishes another, . . . until he displays a beautiful face upon the statue, . . . until the godlike brilliance of virtue might shine out from within . . . self-mastery [*sôphrosynê*] established in a pure and firm base."[9] In this passage, as with Gregory above,[10] sculpting a statue signifies the process by which one removes exteriority. Plotinus stresses the need to turn *within* (*endon*: 1.6.9.1), to find what is interior. Indeed, Plotinus's interiority appears to be absolute. By this I mean that in Plotinus's philosophical worldview one's self reaches, through virtue and contemplation, a level of complete interiority where the self is united in total with the immovable and solitary divine "One."[11] In Plotinus, anything that is material, sensible, moving, and bodily appears to be ultimately cancelled. In Gregory, however, the emphasis on interiority does not indicate such a cancellation of exteriority. Gregory's sculpting is paralleled by a process through which the ideal self, filled with presence and divine movement, becomes a medium and exemplar of virtue. The ideal theologian teaches theology and manifests his spiritual beauty. Their

[9] Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 252d5–e1; see further *Symposium* 208a3–b6, 210e6–211b7, 215a6–b3, 216d5–217a2, and 221d7–222a6, with Nussbaum (2001) 176, 183–184, and 195.

[10] For Plotinian echoes in Gregory see Papaioannou (2006b). It seems that Psellos too read Plotinus directly; cf., e.g., Pontikos (1992) xxi–xxvi.

[11] *Agalma*, as several passages of the *Enneads* suggest, expresses totality and oneness of being, in the form of self-sameness (6.6.6.36–42), continuity (2.9.8.10–16), or transparency (5.8.4–6). On Plotinus see Hadot (1993), O'Meara (1993) and Blumenberg (1993).

interiority is made available through their discourses and through their actions. They are not merely turned inward; they are also images, *statues*.

The value that Gregory places upon exteriority, when exteriority functions as a manifestation interior presence, is also evident in his conception of animation, the topic to which I now turn. A characteristic example is Gregory's conclusion to his *Funeral Oration on Basil of Caesarea* (*Orat.* 43.80). Here, Gregory imagines his speech as a painted portrait of Basil:

> κοινὸν ἀρετῆς πίνακα καὶ πρόγραμμα σωτήριον πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, ψυχαῖς ἁπάσαις· πρὸς ὃν βλέποντες, ἀπευθυνοῦμεν τὸν βίον, ὡς νόμον ἔμψυχον.
>
> a painted panel of virtue available to everyone and a salvific public proclamation before all churches and all souls; gazing upon him, we may regulate our lives, as if gazing upon an animate law.

As Gregory claims here, Basil is rendered visible through Gregory's discursive portrait. He becomes an exemplar that everyone is to imitate and follow. Now, Basil is not a mere "painted panel," a mere image, but is an "*animate* law." Basil is imagined here as being alive, as being present, for, as Gregory advises in the conclusion of the same passage, the audience must "continually [ἀεί] gaze upon Basil, for he is both seeing and seen [ὡς ὁρῶντος καὶ ὁρωμένου]."[12] It is not only the audience, but Basil too that *sees*. It is notable that earlier in the *Oration* Gregory speaks of Basil as being in "continuous movement" in his assent toward God (*to aei-kinêton*; *Orat.* 43.66; cf. 43.12) and as being filled with the Spirit in "moving" his pen when writing theology (*Orat.* 43.68).[13] Basil, that is, is very much alive and Gregory's discourse facilitates further this continuous presence through his own discursive, textual representation of Basil. The one who lies beyond the senses is made available to the senses through discourse. Animation signifies a process of presentation, the facilitation of presence.[14]

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[12] Psellos cites this very phrase in his Funeral oration on his friend Xiphilinos (ed. Sathas, Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, v. 4, 453.7–8).

[13] On the concept of *aeikinêton* in Cappadocian theology see Harrison (1992) 84–85 and 122.

[14] For other usages of animation as presence: see *Orat.* 1.6, 5.4, 33.15, 43.5; cf. *Orat.* 30.20. Relevant is here the Hellenistic notion of the ruler as the "animate law" (cf. Steinwenter [1946]) from which Gregory differs with his emphasis on presence.

Animation *as presence* and interior movement is enabled not by any arbitrary kind of appearance; rather, it is made possible through the appearance that *discourse* provides. For, through his conceptualization of animation, Gregory is also promoting a certain theory about the function of discourse as the material manifestation of thought; he is promoting, that is, a certain aesthetics of discourse. According to this aesthetics, discourse is useful and necessary as a vehicle of meaning, what Gregory calls a translator, a *hermeneus* of meaning.[15] For Gregory, the material aspect of language produces, when used properly, transparency.[16] This transparency allows for a presence that cannot be challenged by any exterior boundaries. Even if Gregory, as alluded to above (cf. *Orat.* 27 *passim*), is quite critical of rhetoric and artistic discourse, he also affirms a *need* for discourse. As he claims in his *Funeral Oration on Basil*, "one also needs the power of discourse for the presentation of one's thoughts" (*Orat.* 43.13).

Gregory is not alone in retaining the primacy of interiority while affirming the necessity of exteriority, especially discursive exteriority, in the mediation and exemplification of presence. Late antique discourse in general is characterized by an emphasis on what might be called 'theological aesthetics.' This aesthetics is marked by the fear of exteriority when exteriority does not mediate presence, but it simultaneously asserts presence as the function of exterior representation. Christian rhetoric attacks the pursuit of exterior pleasures, extravagant discourse, or theatrical performance, while it simultaneously proclaims the presence of God and his truth everywhere: in the discourse of his speakers, in the material appearance of his creation, in the bodies of the saints, and, most importantly in the incarnation of Christ, what Gregory of Nazianzos and other late antique theologians call, the *presence* of Christ (e.g. *Orat.* 4.19).[17]

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[15] Cf. *Orat.* 2.39, 32.14, 43.65.

[16] Cf. *Orat.* 43.65 and 67 with *Orat.* 2.39, 28.4, 32.14 and 27 on the continuity of meaning, expression, and reception of discourse. See also *Orat.* 7.16: "My gift is discourse [λόγος] which . . . in future times will be perceived as eternally moving [ἀεὶ κινούμενον], . . . a discourse that preserves continually [ἀεί] in the ears and the souls the one who is being honored, and presents the image [τὴν εἰκόνα] of the desired one, an image which is more transparent [ἐναργεστέραν] than paintings."

[17] For Christian discourse in general see Cameron (1991); on affirmation of presence see Frank (2000) and Miller (2004). Christian rhetors speak of Christ himself as the "animate image" of the Father (Origen, *Cels.* 2.9.38–52), of Adam as an "animate statue" fashioned by God (Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 10.98; *Suid.*

This theological aesthetics is not only Christian; pagan discourse pursues similar notions. For instance, Porphyry, Plotinus's biographer, editor, and student, describes the mind (*nous*) as an animate statue in which god is present in an absolute (*pantêi kai pantôs*) fashion (*Pros Markellan* 11). Similar examples from late antique, Christian and pagan, authors are many.[18] Before turning to Psellos and his rereading of the animate statue metaphor, I wish to briefly discuss one more late antique author: Proclus, the fifth century Neoplatonic philosopher. Not only was Proclus an author central to Psellos's worldview, but he also maximizes the ideas that are evident in Gregory, summarizing, as it were, the late antique conceptualizations of statues and animation.

Proclus frequently refers to statues and animation. He, for instance, speaks of statues animated through theurgy, the created world as an animate moving statue, poetic myths as statues that reveal truth, and the names of gods as statues that exhibit the divine.[19] For Proclus, the word statue, *agalma*, denotes something that lies on the exterior, like an imprint or a reflection, but that also reveals something interior. Animation, what Proclus calls *empsychia*, signifies revelation; it is equal to such terms as *typôsis* (impression), *emphasis* (reflection), *homoiôsis* (likeness) as well as *enargeia* (transparency), all of which guarantee that exteriority manifests interiority.[20] Furthermore, for Proclus animation signifies the origin of movement, a movement, as he says, that is located *within*.[21] Moreover, Proclus does not simply use animation and statues as metaphors but indeed theorizes about them. In a passage from Proclus's commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*, Proclus

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alpha.425), and of the Virgin, the Mother of God, as an "animate temple" of God's presence (*Acathist Hymn* 24).

[18] Cf. Julian the Apostate's notion that the sun is an animate statue of, what he calls, the Father (*Letter* 111.56–58) and footnotes 30 and 37 below.

[19] On theurgy see Lewy (1978) and van den Berg (2001) 66–85; also Athanassiadi (1993). On the animate world see *In Ti.* 3.5.30–6.22; for an earlier discussion see Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum* 3.71.5–72.11 as well as Basil of Caesarea's rejection of the idea: *Homélies sur l'hexaéméron* 3.9.20–25 and 8.1.4–19. On myths as statues see Proclus, *In R.* 1.73.12–30. On the names of gods as "speaking statues" see *In R.* 2.107.25f. and *Theol. Plat.* 1.124.3–2; this is an image that was appropriated in the Pseudo-Dionysian Corpus, cf. Saffrey (1981).

[20] Cf. *In Prm.* 846.22–30; see also Philo, *On the Creation of the World according to Moses* 23. On impression see Papaioannou (2004), on reflection see Kustas (1973), on likeness see Halliwell (2002) *passim*, and on transparency cf. *In R.* 2.246.5f. and *In Tim.* 1.330.29f. and see Lévy and Pernot (1997).

[21] *In Prm.* 1004.27–38. Cf. *Inst.* 165.9–15, *In Tim.* 1.412.22f.

asserts that the body of a self-mastered [*sôphron*] man receives the impression of the beauty, wisdom, and masculinity of the soul. He concludes his discussion with the following elaboration on the image of the animate statue (847.19–848.2):

> Καὶ τὸ ἄγαλμα μὲν τὸ ἔμψυχον μετέλαβε μὲν τυπικῶς . . . καὶ τῆς τέχνης τοιῶσδε μεμορφωμένον τορνευούσης αὐτὸ καὶ ξεούσης καὶ ἐκτυπούσης, ἐμφάσεις δὲ ἔσχε ζωτικὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς δι' ἃς καὶ ψυχοῦσθαι λέγεται, ὡμοίωται δὲ ὅλον πρὸς τὸν θεὸν οὗ ἐστιν ἄγαλμα· . . . Κάλλιον δὲ ἴσως καὶ θεολογικώτερον μὴ διῃρημένως οὕτω λέγειν, ἀλλὰ τῶν νοερῶν εἰδῶν καὶ μετέχειν ὡς παρόντων φάναι τὰ αἰσθητὰ . . .
>
> And the animate statue [a] participates through impression in the art that shapes, fashions, and impresses upon it a particular form; [b] it receives life-giving reflections from the universe because of which it is even said that it is alive; and [c] has as a whole been made similar to the god of whom it is a statue . . . Perhaps it is better and more theological not to make these distinctions, but to say that the perceptible objects both participate in the intellectual forms as if they are present to them . . .

For Proclus, material objects that are available to the senses manifest the presence of interiority, the "presence of beauty" as Proclus later in the same text argues (855.6–21).[22] Here, the gap between interiority and appearance has been bridged. The animate statue conveys precisely the idea that the exteriority of the *agalma* reveals the divine. Proclus's statue is an appearance that is turned by animation into presence.

As was the case with Gregory, aesthetic appearance is not praised in itself. Appearance is valued in as much as it is able to render itself transparent in mediating presence. With this use of the animate statue, Proclus elucidates a concept that is implicit in Gregory and that was reconfigured in Psellan aesthetics: the metaphor of the statue and the concept of animation ultimately convey the very same idea, namely the meeting of interiority with exteriority. Both statue and animation relate a process in which appearance is turned into presence. This, I argue, is the late antique contribution to the metaphor of the animate statue.

[22] For further discussion of this text see *Morrow and Dillon* (1987).

Psellos on Appearance, Performance, and Movement

When Psellos, in the eleventh century, speaks repeatedly of statues and animation there has been a great cultural change at work. As I noted above, by the end of the eighth century, statues are no longer created; indeed, as is suggested by Byzantine historiographical narratives of the early ninth century, statues are treated as objects of the pagan past, as signs that have been destroyed, safely buried, or simply ignored.[23] In the meantime, however, a new and intense debate over form, animation, and presence has begun to occupy Byzantine discourse. From iconophile theology to middle Byzantine literary aesthetics, the relation of interiority with exteriority is extensively discussed and late antique theological aesthetics are negotiated and redefined.[24] In Psellos's writings, this discussion reaches an important transition. Psellos reverses late antique theological aesthetics and its emphasis on presence. His usage of statues and animation, idiosyncratic as it might appear at first glance when compared with other Byzantine authors, is telling of the open possibilities that late antique discourse bequeathed to Byzantine intellectuals.

Implicit Criticism

Late-antique discourse provoked a variety of responses in Psellan writing. Imitation is one of them. Psellos replicates the notion of animation as presence in both its Neoplatonic and Christian versions. He enjoys displaying his knowledge of theurgic practices and repeating monumental Proclean expressions such as: "we are images of

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[23] See *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* 27 and 28 with Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 25–26, 28, 49–50 and Cameron (1996).

[24] See e.g. Brubaker (1989), Dagron (1991), Parry (1996), and Barber (2002) with Demoen (1998, 2000) and Louth (2006). Notably, as argued in Barber (2002), ninth century pro-image rhetoric is hesitant to affirm divine presence in icons; similarly, popular hagiographic imagination was resistant to replace saint's relics, tombs, or other sites of appearance with icon paintings (see Brubaker [2003]). On literary aesthetics, presence and/or animation, see Photius (*Bibliotheke*, *passim*), Arethas (cf. *Scripta Minora* I 32, 268.10f.), Symeon Magistros (cf. *Letter* 89), Christophoros Mytilinaios (e.g. *Epigram* 112), Ioannes Mauropous (*Discourse on the three holy fathers and teachers, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom*, ed. Bollig and de Lagard, 106–119), and Ioannes Sikeliotes (*Commentary on On the Forms*, e.g. 228.18–26, 355.2–17 and 419.17–420.7). On Photius see Kustas (1962) and Afinogenov (1995). On Byzantine literary aesthetics in general see Kustas (1973).

noetic substances, statues of unknown signs, εἰκόνες μὲν τῶν νοερῶν οὐσιῶν, ἀγάλματα δὲ τῶν ἀγνώστων συνθημάτων."[25] Patristic belief in presence is also evident in Psellos. He refers to holy relics as animate statues that perform miracles and to icons as objects that enable the presence of the divine.[26]

Psellos, however, may also be read as implicitly critical of late-antique theological aesthetics. Psellos's oration on the so-called "usual miracle" in the Constantinopolitan church of Blachernai is an example of such possible criticism. The miracle that Psellos describes and discusses involves two events: the lifting of a veil covering an icon of the Mother of God and the simultaneous movement of Her form.[27] Proclus's theory of animation features prominently in Psellos's explanation of the miracle. The lifting and the movement are presented by Psellos as an instance of Neoplatonically understood animation, as the presence, that is, of that which has no material form (see esp. *Orat.* 4.676f.). One may be tempted to accept Psellos's Proclean description of the miracle, even while elsewhere Psellos qualifies his use of Proclean philosophy.[28] However, what betrays Psellos's critique of Proclus's theory of animation and the Christian belief in a miracle-performing, presence-effecting iconography is Psellos's suggestion that his own aim is *not* theological instruction *per se*, but the recreation of the miracle through discourse, the production of a rhetorical effect (*Orat. hag.* 4.473–484). Psellos's highly stylized speech and mixture of, what he calls, "spiritual" and "political" discourses (line 750) unsettles the primacy of theology and makes one wonder whether it matters to him if the miracle actually occurred or if he is performing a rhetorical game.[29] That Psellos rhetorically reworks a theological,

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[25] *Phil. min.* II.144.23–24. On theurgy see e.g. *Orat. for.* 1.310–321, *Enc. in mat.* 1785–1789, and *Letter* 187 (Sathas).

[26] *Theol.* II.3.222–228 and 6.98–104. On presence and icons see the paper by Charles Barber in this volume.

[27] *Orat. hag.* 4; see Papaioannou (2001) with further bibliography.

[28] For instance, *Phil. min.* I.16.223–228 with 240–241. From Psellos's use of Proclus see Duffy (2002).

[29] This rhetorical playfulness does not diminish the various ways in which Psellos's rhetorical representation of the Blachernai miracle may parallel contemporary *visual* representations of the Blachernai miracle as argued in Papaioannou (2001); for a different view see Pentcheva (2000) and Angelidi and Papamastorakis (2004). Though we should not assume that Byzantine rhetoric influenced the production of Byzantine art (on which, rightly, Cormack [2003]), tropes of representation are indeed shared by both media.

late antique, interpretation of animation should, I suggest, be read either as a revival of or a continuity with the past, but also and more interestingly as an accentuation of the limitations of late-antique discourse, its vulnerability to a rhetorical re-creation.

Another example of possible critique can be seen in the image with which I began, namely Monomachos as an animate statue on the peak of a mountain. In portraying Monomachos as a statue, placed upon a mountain top, Psellos is promoting a direct and explicit comparison between Monomachos and one of the most favored biblical figures in late antiquity: Moses, "the leader of the people of Israel" (*Orat. pan.* 6.251). In late antique texts, Moses is imagined as a model of virtue that has reached the limits of human perfection and mediates divine law to all of humanity.[30] Monomachos, imagined as Moses, is a somewhat peculiar figure, for Psellos's extravagant rhetoric exposes Monomachos's ambivalent nature. Monomachos, as Psellos claims, is "both immovable and moving" (lines 120–129), "a soft and animate instrument" that produces music that will "resound throughout the world" (83–91). As an embodiment of art, he transports his audience to a state of pleasure fixed yet also "multiform" (235–247). Moreover, aesthetic movement affects the definition of the nature that Psellos ascribes to his object: Monomachos is "a nature, both soft and steadfast" (204–207). Monomachos is, thus, by nature, malleable and can thereby be fashioned and refashioned by Psellos, when Psellos wishes to praise him, but also when he wishes to criticize him.[31] Therefore, that Monomachos is presented as an "animate statue" is perhaps more than a mere Psellan affirmation of late antique morality. By calling Monomachos an animate statue Psellos wishes to indicate that this new Moses is indeed a creation of Psellos's *own* rhetoric: "Stand *for me* at the peak of your mountain . . ."

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[30] Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1.26.167.3–168.1 and Gregory of Nyssa, *Le vie de Moïse* esp. 2.313. Moses is a favorite paradigm for Gregory of Nazianzus as well, who e.g. compares Basil of Caesarea with Moses (*Orat.* 43.72). From the many similar images of exemplary and 'statuesque' leaders and saints see e.g. Themistius, *Περὶ φιλανθρωπίας ἢ Κωνστάντιος* 9b5–c1 or Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 99.17–19 and 223.12–13.

[31] In the *Chronographia*, e.g., Monomachos is presented positively as being "easily movable" toward exterior charms and pleasures (6.33), a proclivity to which later (6.47–49; cf. 6.201) the gradual demolition of the empire is ascribed.

Discourse as Statue

Without wishing to push the argument of Psellos's criticism of theological aesthetics too far,[32] I would like to suggest that a different approach is also at work in Psellos's use of the metaphor of the animate statue. This approach moves toward a recovery of the value of appearance *as such.* Psellos expresses this valuation by promoting the aesthetics of statues and by conceiving animation as exterior movement.

It is in his literary theory that the stage is set for Psellos's statues and animation.[33] Let us look at a passage from one of Psellos's many lectures in which he examines phrases from Gregory of Nazianzos's homilies (*Theol.* I.19.49–69, on Gregory's *Orat.* 40.24):

> τοιοῦτός ἐστιν ὁ μέγας οὗτος ἀνήρ· τῶν γὰρ ἄλλων ἢ φιλοσόφως γραψάντων, οὐ μέντοι γε δὲ μετὰ χάριτος, ἢ τεχνικοὺς λόγους συνθέντων, φιλοσόφου δὲ ἄτερ ἐννοίας, οὗτος οὕτω θαυμασίως ἀμφότερα συνεκέρασεν, ὡς μὴ θάτερον λυμαίνεσθαι παρὰ θάτερον, ἀλλ᾽ ἑκάτερον παρ᾽ ἑκατέρου τὴν ἐνοῦσαν ἑκάστῳ ἔχειν ὠφέλειαν· τῷ μὲν γὰρ ἡδεῖ τῆς φράσεως ἡ βαθύτης [γλυ]καίνεται τοῦ νοήματος, τῷ δὲ μεγαλοπρεπεῖ τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων τὸ κομμωτικὸν κοσμεῖται τῆς [λέξε]ως. ἔοικεν οὖν ὁ λόγος αὐτῷ οὐ τῇ Καλάμιδος ἀγαλματοποιίᾳ, ἀλλὰ τῇ Δαιδάλου καὶ Πολυκλείτου· [ὁ μὲν] γὰρ ταῖς ἐπιτυχούσαις ὕλαις τὴν τέχνην ἐναπεμάττετο, οἱ δὲ οὐκ ἠξίουν ἐν ἄλλῳ γένει [. . . . . .] ἥπερ ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν τὸ ἀκριβὲς τῶν μορφῶν ἐπιδείκνυσθαι. τοιοῦτον οὖν καὶ τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ἄγαλμα· [ἥ] τε γὰρ ὕλη μάλα λαμπρὰ καὶ διαφανὴς καὶ τῆς Ἀττικῆς στιλπνότητος ἀποστίλβουσα, ἁβραί τε γὰρ λέξεις καὶ ἀξιωματικὴ σεμνολογία· καὶ πάντα ἡρωικά, τό τε εἶδος, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ὁ φιλόσοφος νοῦς, οὕτω[34] προσηνῶς τῇ ὕλῃ προσήρμοσται, καὶ οὕτω τὴν ἐμψυχίαν ἐμπνεῖ, ὡς ἐοικέναι ζῆν αὐτὸ καὶ μιμεῖσθαι τό, ἵν᾽ οὕτως εἴπω, θεοείκελον ἄγαλμα. μᾶλλον δὲ τὰ μὲν τοῦ Δαιδάλου ἐδόκει κινεῖσθαι . . . αἱ δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνες τῶν λόγων αὐταὶ μὲν οὐ κεκίνηνται, τὸν δὲ θεωρὸν κινεῖσθαι καταναγκάζουσιν.
>
> This great man [*i.e.* Gregory] is of such quality: while other authors have written either in a philosophical manner, but without charm or have composed artistic discourses, but without philosophical thought, this man has commingled both in such an admirable fashion, so that

[32] Psellos's criticism of extreme expressions of piety has been well discussed in Kaldellis (1999) *passim.*

[33] Jakov Ljubarskij was the first to study Psellan aesthetic innovations; see Ljubarskij (1975). See further Dyck (1986), Hörandner (1995, 1996), and Agapitos (1998).

[34] Gautier reads "ὅτῳ."

> neither is harmed by the other, but each obtains from the other the usefulness that unites them. For by the pleasurableness of style, the depth of thought is sweetened, and, by the magnificence of thoughts, the embellished language is adorned. And so his discourse does not resemble the sculptural art of Kalamis, but that of Daidalos, and of Polykleitos; for the former fashioned his art on random-found materials, while the latter two would not deem worthy to display the exactness of forms in any other material than that which came from Athens.[35] Such is also the statue of the father [Gregory]; its material is quite brilliant and transparent, shining Attic brightness (for the words are graceful, solemnity is dignified, and everything is heroic), while its form,[36] which is the philosophical mind, is so gently attached to matter and breaths animation into it in such a manner that the statue seems to be alive and to resemble, in a manner of speaking, the god-like statue. Or, rather, Daidalos's statues appeared to be moving . . . while the discursive images of the father do not themselves move, yet force their viewer to move.

That Gregory's statue of discourse is presented here as being animate is theorized by Psellos in terms that are again clearly late antique. Animation denotes movement which originates in Gregory's mind. Psellos's terms, such as mind, form, transparency, purity, and depth of thought, are all seminal Neoplatonic notions.[37] Yet, while Psellos is making a philosophic argument about Gregory's inspired texts, he also stresses their exteriority. Exteriority is expressed through the metaphor of the statue per se, separate from its animation; statue is understood as *exterior* form that is juxtaposed to the interior form, the Neoplatonic form (*eidos*), "that breaths animation." Statue, *agalma*, for Psellos is aesthetic appeal, *charis*, a word that signifies rhetorical appearance as distinct from philosophical content.[38] Psellos praises

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[35] On Daidalos and his animate statue-making see Frontisi-Ducroux (1975), Morris (1992), and Steiner (2001) 44–50, 139 and *passim*. On Polykleitos see e.g. Philostratus, *VA* 2.20.24–28; on the Attic style of Daidalos's statues see Philostratus, *Im.*1.16.1.

[36] *Eidos:* a Neoplatonic notion with Aristotelian background; *cf.* Aristotle, *On the Soul, passim* with, e.g., John Philoponus's *Commentary, passim*.

[37] The primacy of *nous* and *eidos* is a common theme in Neoplatonism. On transparency see Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.8.4.4–11; on purity as a prerequisite for the animation of statues see Hermeias, *In Phdr.* 87.4–9 (ed. Couvreur); on depth see Proclus, *In. Prm.* 618.3, 682.7, 876.31–32.

[38] See e.g. *Letter* 84 to Konstantinos (Sathas) and 212 to Ioannes Doukas (Kurtz and Drexl). The term *agalma* is consistently placed next to beauty, *kallos*: e.g. *Chron.* VI. 125.1ff. and *Hist. Syntomos* 94.5. Psellos also regards *agalma* as an object whose sight incites erotic desire; see *Letters* 68 to Konstantinos Leichoudes (Sathas) 300.14, 138 to the patriarch of Antioch (Kurtz and Drexl) 165.2–6, and *Chron.* III 20.1–9.

the pleasure that discourse causes, its material, its words, its external embellishment (what he calls *kommôtikon*). This praise of discursive appearance is part of Psellos's general contention that appearance and content *together* generate ideal discourse. As is suggested at the conclusion of Psellos's lecture on Gregory (*Theol.* I.19.81–93), Gregory is an author that mixes perfectly philosophy and meaning with rhetoric and form. Indeed, Psellos wishes to impart to his students a new rhetoric that combines interiority with appearance: "so that the entire form [εἶδος] of discourse is beautiful, both according to the external *and* according to the intelligible beauty: κατά τε τὸ φαινόμενον κάλλος καὶ τὸ νοούμενον (*Theol.* I.98.6–8, on Gregory's *Orat.* 43.1).

In another text devoted solely to the description of Gregory's discourse, it becomes clearer that Psellos is signaling *appearance* when he uses the metaphor of the statue. This text is titled "Discourse Improvised by the Hypertimos Psellos to the Bestarchês Pothos who requested of him to write about the Style of the Theologian" (ed. Mayer [1911] and Levy [1912]). Here, Psellos parallels Gregory's speech-making to classical statue-making, in particular Pheidias's creation of the *body of Aphrodite*, "τὸ σῶμα τῆς Ἀφροδίτης" (Mayer 170f.; Levy §17–18) In encountering such bodiliness, such exterior appearance, Psellos confesses that he is often captured by beauty and charm (*kallos* and *charis*) and forgets the theological content: "leaving behind the meaning [τὸν νοῦν] of his theology, I spend a springtime in the rose-gardens of his words and I am carried away by the senses [ταῖς αἰσθήσεσιν]; and when I realize that I am carried away, I love the one who has taken me away and I fill him with kisses. But if I am forced to depart from the phrasing and return to the meaning, . . . I lament the addition as a deprivation" (Mayer 170f., Levy §17–18). It is the surface of discourse in which Psellos takes delight. It is the very surface that moves him in the realm of pure exteriority, of aesthetic, sensory time and space. Psellos wishes to remain in that realm for the pleasure that it allows. In such a context, it is no surprise that Psellos compares discourse to the sculpted "body of Aphrodite"; for the statue has become a metaphor for aesthetics in the literal sense of the word, namely valuation of what is available to the senses.

Animated Body and Material Soul

Psellos does not limit his use of the animate statue metaphor to literary criticism; as noted above, Psellos also imagines human selves

as animate statues. A passage from a text similar to the speech addressed to Monomachos may help us understand how the metaphor functions in reference to the formation and representation of self. In the funeral oration for Niketas, Psellos portrays his friend as follows (ed. Sathas [Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, v. 4] 93.18–94.12; date: *ca.* 1075):

> οὕτω γὰρ ταῖς ἁπάντων ἥρμοσε γνώμαις τε καὶ ψυχαῖς, καὶ οὕτω πᾶσι κατάλληλος ἦν, ὡς ἐοικέναι τῷ παρὰ πολλῶν ἐκείνῳ θρυλλουμένῳ ἀγάλματι, ᾧ δὴ τέχνη τις ἀνδριαντοποιητικὴ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑκατέρωθεν φερομένους εἰργάσατο, ἑστῶτάς τε τοὺς αὐτοὺς καὶ συγκινουμένους τῷ δοκεῖν, ὃ τοῖς ἑκατέρωθεν ἐφεστῶσι ἐπίσης ἠφίει τὸν ὀφθαλμόν· οὐ γὰρ ὥσπερ Φωκίων καὶ Κάτων, βαρεῖς καὶ οὐκ ἀνεκτοὶ φανέντες, οὐδὲ κατάλληλοι τοῖς καιροῖς, μετὰ τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ ἑαυτὸν προσαπώλεσεν, οὐδὲ σκυθρωπὴν ἐδείκνυ τὴν ἀρετήν, οὐδὲ μὴ σπουδαίαν τὴν χάριν, ἀλλ᾽ ἕκαστον τῇ τοῦ ἑτέρου σπουδῇ δεικνὺς σπουδαιότερον, ὁμοῦ τε τοῖς ὁμοίοις ὅμοιος ἦν, καὶ τῶν ἐκ μέρους γνωριζομένων καλλίων παρὰ πολύ σκυθρωποῦ τε καὶ χαρίεντος ἐν μέσῳ γενόμενος, ἀμφοτέρους ἂν ἤδυνε, πρὸς μὲν τόν, σκυθρωπάσας συμμέτρως, πρὸς δὲ τόν, ἐμμελῶς χαριεντισάμενος· . . . οὕτως εὐάγωγος ἦν τὴν ψυχήν οἷόν τις κηρὸς εὔπλαστος καὶ εὐκίνητος, μήτε ἀπαλὸς ἄγαν καὶ διαρρέων, μήτε σκληρὸς καὶ ἀντίτυπος, ἀλλὰ δικαιότατα τὴν τῶν ἠθῶν ἁρμονίαν προβέβλητο δὲ ταύτῃ καὶ τὸ σῶμα οἷόν τις εὔτεχνος ἀνδριάς, πλὴν ὅσον οὐκ ἄψυχος οὐδὲ ἀνηθοποίητος, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν κοινὸν τοῦτο ἔμψυχος, τὸ δὲ τῶν ὀλίγων, κἀκ τῆς ἀρίστης ψυχῆς τῆς εὖ κεκραμμένης τῷ σώματι, ἠθός τε ὑπεμφαίνων χρηστὸν καὶ πάντοθεν ἕλκον τὸν θεωρόν.
>
> He adapted to the individual character and soul of each and every one and he was so fitting to all that he resembled that famous statue,[39] in which sculptural art fashioned eyes that moved in both directions—the same eyes being both stable and moving in appearance—and which cast its gaze to those who were standing on either side equally. For he, unlike Phokion and Cato who appeared heavy, intolerable, and unable to adapt to the particular situations, did not lose himself along with the exterior matters, neither did he show a virtue that was gloomy, nor was his charm unserious. Rather, by rendering each element [*i.e.* both virtue and charm] more serious with his attention to the counterpart of each, he was both similar to the similar and simultaneously better, much better, than those who are distinguished in their achievement in one specific element. If, for instance, he would happen to be in between a gloomy person and a cheerful person, he would please both by appearing gloomy in a symmetrical fashion to the latter and by being melodiously cheerful to the former; . . . his soul was so yielding

[39] I am unable to identify this reference.

> as if wax easily fashioned and easily impressionable, neither too soft and flowing away nor hard and resisting impression, but displaying in the most precise manner his harmony of character. And before this harmony his body was set just like a well-crafted statue, only this statue was not lifeless nor without character-making [*êthopoiia*], but it was, on the one hand, animate (something rather common) and on the other (something that belongs to the few and to that perfect soul that is best mixed with the body) revealing a morally good character, luring its viewers to itself from all around.

Like Gregory's discourse, Niketas possesses an exterior appearance, a body, that resembles a statue. This statue moves according to its viewers by adapting to their particular condition. Exterior appearance and its movement are a reflection and an effect of Niketas's inner being, namely his soul. Through animation, the body reflects and participates in interiority. As Psellos ingeniously suggests, however, the soul too is, to a certain degree, a reflection of the body. For Niketas's soul is conceived in *material* terms as wax that is neither too soft nor too hard, impressible but also steadfast. This is a paradoxical soul that has enough materiality to match perfectly Niketas's body, just like Niketas's body has enough animation to resemble his soul.[40] Soul and body, inside and outside, have been transformed into one another; distinction becomes difficult and a hierarchy of what is primary over what is secondary is not found. The animated statue is a metaphor for precisely this mixture.

In imagining Niketas as a perfect mixture of body and soul, Psellos introduces movement as a seminal feature of this fusion. In the final words of the passage, movement is understood as an effect of presence, the revealing of the morally good character of Niketas's soul. Earlier, however, movement is also conceived as, what one might call, performance. Psellos is enamored by Niketas's ability to change and adapt according to his audience. Niketas's soul is easily moving and movable, *eukinêtos*, for it is able to become "similar to the similar." This is a type of movement that is expected of actors; to make oneself similar to others is an expression from theatrical terminology.[41]

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[40] Later in the same oration, Psellos mentions another parallelism of perfect blending between inner and outer, this time *nous* and *glôtta*, discursive meaning and discursive form (95.8–96.5): κρᾶσις ἠθῶν, ἡ ἐν λόγοις ἡδονή τε καὶ τέρψις, νοῦς γεννῶν καὶ γλῶσσα ἀττικίζουσα, ἡ περὶ τὸ λέγειν δύναμις καὶ ἡ περὶ τὸ πλάττειν εὐφυία.

[41] On similarity and theatrical performance see e.g. Lucian, *On Dancing* 83–84, Proclus *In R.* (1.44.1–47.19), Arethas, *Scripta Minora* 8, pp. 86.29–87.1.

It may be Niketas's fine ethos that is revealed through his statuesque body, but it is also exterior change as an aesthetic effect that draws Psellos's attention. As with Gregory's discourse, Psellos lingers upon appearance whether inscribed upon the soul and its materiality or expressed in the ability to change or the ability to *appear* as changing.

Self-representation

In discussing Gregory's discourse and Niketas's person, Psellos emphasizes appearance; simultaneously, he takes care to indicate that appearance and its concomitant movement are effects upon *the viewer*. Niketas's ethos remains stable within while "luring its viewers" and Gregory's discursive statues "*do not* themselves *move*, yet force their viewer to move"; ultimately, it is Psellos, the reader and viewer, who is affected by appearance, for he is the one who is "carried away." While depicting others, that is, Psellos appreciates their exteriority, but, in a late antique mode, asserts interiority as well—the mind of Gregory and the ethos of Niketas. It is in talking about *himself* that Psellos indulges in external appearance with a singular focus. It is in his *own* self-representation that Psellos performs his most radical subversion of late antique concepts and metaphors.

In Psellos's richly embellished self-portrait that one finds throughout his writings, there exist two moments in which the notion of movement, the image of the statue, and his own self are closely linked to one another. The first is found in a letter addressed by Psellos to Konstantinos, the nephew of Patriarch Keroularios (*Letter* 86 [Sathas] 329.23–330.8). Psellos confides to his friend his aesthetic predilections:

> . . . γοητεύομαι ἄνθεσί τε φαινομένοις καὶ χάρισιν, εἴτε πόαις ταῦτα, εἴτε λόγοις ἐγκάθηται. καί με οὐ τοσοῦτον χειροῦται ὁ Παιανιεὺς Δημοσθένης, ἢ ὁ Λαοδικεὺς Ἀριστείδης ἐν συστροφαῖς νοημάτων καὶ περιόδοις, καὶ ταῖς ἀντιστρόφοις τῶν σχημάτων μεταβολαῖς, ὅσον ὁ Λήμνιος Φιλόστρατος, καὶ μάλιστα ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἀγαλμάτων ἐκφράσεσι, χαλῶν τὸν λίθον, καὶ τὸν χαλκὸν ἐξυγραίνων, καὶ τακερὸν τῶν σιδηρῶν[42] ὀφθαλμῶν ἀπολείβων καὶ ἐφελκόμενος δάκρυα. σὺ . . . βούλει δέ σοι καὶ τὸν τοῦ κάλλους ἐξάπτειν[43] ἔρωτα ὑγρὰν τὴν

[42] Sathas, based on the *Parisinus graecus 1182*, edits σιδήρων. I follow here the reading of *Marcianus gr. 524* f. 166r.

[43] ἐξάπτειν: *Marcianus*. Sathas and the *Parisinus*: ἐξαστράπτειν.

λέξιν ποιούμενος καὶ οἷον ἀρωματίζουσαν, . . . καὶ οὐκ οἶδα ἥν τινα λέξιν ἁρμόσω τῇ τοσαύτῃ διαλλαγῇ[44] τῶν ὑποθέσεων. ὅθεν, ἢν τὰ πολλὰ αὐχμηρὸς δοκῶ, μή μοι γίνου μεμψίμοιρος· αὐτίκα γάρ σοι μεταμορφώσομαι, οὐ γάρ εἰμι χείρων τῶν ζώων ἐκείνων ὅσα ἐξ ἑτέρων ἕτερα τοῖς εἴδεσι γίνεται.

I am spellbound by exterior flowers and charms, whether they sit on grass or on discourse. Demosthenes from Paeanea or Aristeides from Laodikeia do not captivate me as much in the turnings of thoughts, periodic structures, and the juxtaposing changes of figures, as Philostratus from Lemnos captivates me, especially in his descriptions of statues, when he slackens the stone and saturates the bronze and draws languishing tears from the iron eyes.[45] . . . You wish me to excite your love of beauty by making my language watery and, as it were, fragrant . . . and I do not know what kind of language to attach to such a diversity of subjects. Hence, if I seem in most cases rough, do not become annoyed; for I will immediately transform, since I am no worse than those animals that become in their forms another from another.

In this passage, we witness Psellos's reaction to ancient statues. Psellos presents himself as being captivated by the exterior appearance and emotional movement of statues. Notably, the statues that cause this captivation are not statues as such, but objects filtered through the moving, changing and turning, discourse of Philostratus (*systrophais, periodois, metabolais*). These statues are not plastic, but textual objects, placed at the level of exteriority (*phainomena anthê* and *charites*). They are the product of a moving discourse.

Having described his reaction to Philostratus's statues, having described, that is, his reading proclivities, Psellos turns to his own discourse, to his authorial nature. In a subversive gesture, Psellos identifies himself with the aesthetic movement of the discursive statues. For, as he claims, he too is able to enliven his exterior discourse, his *lexis*, by making it watery and fragrant. He too is able to alter his discursive form, like a chameleon that becomes another from another.[46] Movement in both the reception and production, viewing and performance of discourse constitutes Psellos's view of himself as a reader and author.

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[44] διαλλαγῇ: *Marcianus*. Sathas and the *Parisinus*: διαγωγῇ.

[45] See Philostratus, *Im.* as well as Callistratus, *Stat. passim* with Goldhill (1994), Elsner (1995), and Too (1996) as well as Clerc (1915).

[46] Again an attribute that is usually affirmed of performers; cf. Plutarch, *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* 51c14–d10 and Gregory *Orat.* 4.62 who are critical of such performative change.

In the second self-representational passage, Psellos ascribes movement and exterior change not simply to his reading or writing, but to his own nature. In an apology against accusations that he, Psellos, is too jestful a rhetor, the moving statue becomes a metaphor for the nature of his own self (*Orat. min.* 7.105–120):

> εἰ μὲν οὖν οὐδεμία τίς ἐστι χάρις ἐν ἤθεσιν, ἀλλὰ τὸ σκαιὸν οἶδεν ἡ φύσις μόνον καὶ δύστροπον, μηδ' αὖθις ἀφέξῃ τῆς καθ' ἡμῶν λοιδορίας. εἰ δὲ ἄνωθεν ἡ φύσις τάς τε ὥρας τοῖς εἴδεσι καὶ τὰς εὐαρμοστίας τοῖς σώμασι καὶ τὰς κράσεις τοῖς μέλεσι καὶ τὰς χάριτας τοῖς ἤθεσιν ἐπενόησε . . ., τί μοι τὸ ἀστεῖον διασύρεις τῆς φύσεως; εἰ μὲν γὰρ εὐτραπελίαν διέγνωκας, εἴ με ἀκαίρως τεθέασαι στωμυλλόμενον, εἰ ἄλλο τι τοιοῦτον με καθεώρακας, πολλῷ χρῶ καὶ πάλιν τῷ λοιδορήματι εἰ δέ τί μοι ἄνθος ἡ φύσις ἐβλάστησε, τὸ μὲν ἐπὶ γλώττης, τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τῶν ἠθῶν, αὐτόματον οἷον καὶ ἄτεχνον, καὶ οὔτε λέγων καθέστηκα φορτικὸς οὔτε διαμαρτάνω μιμούμενος, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἔνια τῶν ἀγαλμάτων αὐτόχυτον ἢ σφυρήλατον τὸν γέλωτα ἴσχει οὐδὲν πρὸς τοῦτο μηχανησαμένης τῆς τέχνης, οὕτω δὴ κἀμὲ ἡ πρώτη πλάσις εὔχαρι τὸ ἦθος ἐποίησε, τί μοι διασύρεις τὸ καλὸν τουτὶ βλάστημα καὶ ὃ πολλοὶ ζηλοῦν μὲν ἐθέλουσιν, ἀποτυγχάνουσι δὲ σύμπαντες; ἔστι γὰρ ἐμοὶ τοῦτο ὥσπερ τὸ εὔπνουν τοῖς ῥόδοις.
>
> If there exists no charm in character, but nature only knows clumsiness and difficult manners, do not refrain from reproaching me. But if nature from the beginning conceived beautiful forms and adaptive bodies, blended features and charming characters . . . why do you ridicule the witty elegance of my nature? If you discerned empty wit, or have seen me chattering at inappropriate moments, or witnessed me doing anything of that sort, do use much reproach against me. But if nature has blossomed some flower in me, part in my language, part in my character (a spontaneous flower, not made by art), and if I do not become a burden in speaking nor a failure in performing, but my original fashioning was a creation of a charming and graceful character just like that of certain statues which possess a smile that is flowing out of themselves rather than being wrought as an invention of art, why do you ridicule this beautiful blossom which many wish to imitate, but all fail? I do possess it like roses possess their sweet smell.

Psellos likens his nature—body, speech, and *êthos*—to a statue that is self-poured, with movement inscribed upon its face as in a smile. Psellos insists that art has contributed nothing to this nature, thereby he seemingly disassociates himself from empty artistry. Yet *his* nature is paradoxically an artistic one, for it makes itself evident through speech and enactment (*legôn* and *mimoumenos*). It is also paradoxically an aesthetic nature, since it is manifested in a beautiful form, an

adaptive body, and a graceful ethos. Discourse, performance, body, and charm, *appearance*, that is, in all its various dimensions, is what Psellos treasures in his nature. The metaphor of a smiling statue, Psellos's witty variation of the theme of animation, is employed in order to express Psellos's appreciation for appearance, his *own* changing, performing appearance.

The Dialectic of Metaphor

From Gregory's ideal virgin as an animate and visible model of morality to Psellos's own self as an aesthetic and performative figure a great distance has been traversed within the statue metaphorics. We have moved from affirmation of presence to the valuation of appearance, from insistence on virtue to the endorsement of performance, from acceptance of the necessity of discourse to the glorification of discursive form. We have moved from the late antique primacy of interiority to Psellos's indulgence in exteriority. This distance covered, this change in the history of aesthetics, must be understood as a dialogue. Psellos places his version of the statue metaphor within the context of late antique aesthetics which he mimics, negotiates, refashions, and interprets in his own, new, way. Indeed, Psellos's animate statue is inconceivable without the late antique view of exterior appearance as something which can not and should not be effaced because it is necessary in order to mediate presence. Psellos brings this concept of mediation to its subversive conclusion by focusing on the medium rather than on what is mediated. Psellos's version of the metaphor of the animate statue is thus an expression of a cultural dialogical exchange marked by both continuity and change. Dialogue is, after all, inherent in paradoxical metaphors such as that of the animate statue. For animate statues are a metaphor for precisely that, a form that is never completed, but is always enlivened by its authors and readers.

The directions and levels of this dialogue are multiple; here I have only touched upon a few. What Psellos contributed to this dialogue is, as I tried to show, the importance of aesthetic appearance in discourse as well as in the representation of the selves of others and, especially of his own self. Discourse and selfhood are appreciated by Psellos as artistic formations, as both objects and subjects of art. Both

discourse and selfhood acquire an autonomy never before achieved in premodern discourse. With his statue metaphor and animate rhetoric, Psellos compels us to reread his words and to see him as a statue moving, gesturing toward himself with a smile, feigned yet natural.

LIVING PAINTING, OR THE LIMITS OF POINTING? GLANCING AT ICONS WITH MICHAEL PSELLOS

Charles Barber

In recent years, art historians have been reading Michael Psellos' works, using these writings to help them frame an understanding of the art produced in Byzantium during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In this paper, I will focus on the most significant claim that has arisen from this undertaking, namely the notion that Psellos' writings allow us to identify the grounds for a stylistic change at this period. The term used is "living painting."[1]

The notion of "living painting" is first brought to bear on the history of Byzantine art by Hans Belting. He devotes a chapter to this topic in his magisterial *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art.* This book was first published in German in 1990 and was translated into English and published in 1994. The original German text uses the term "beseelte Malerei" and thus brings out more fully the sense of the Greek term that introduces this descriptive category, namely "ἔμψυχος γραφή" or "ensouled painting." Belting links this concept to a new style of icon painting: one that includes more narrative elements and depictions of states of emotion in the subjects represented.[2] Two strands are threaded together to form this conception. The first of these links painting to poetry by means of the rhetorical habits of this era: such that a linked representation of the Christ Child and an image of the dead Christ was understood to have developed from the rhetorical strategy of antithesis.[3] The second

[1] Belting (1994) 261–296. An important response to this is to be found in Cormack (2003) 235–253.

[2] Cormack (1997) 156–57 offers a more neutral reading. Belting introduces the idea of a new style by noting the use of the term καινουργός in lists of monastic possessions. He reads the term as meaning that the compiler of the lists has identified and recorded a new style. Cormack argues that the term should be read more narrowly to mean newly made. The text discussed is the *typikon* of the Theotokos Kecharitomene. An edition of this is available: Gautier (1985) 153. An English translation can be found at: Jordan (2000) 715. Furthermore, it should be noted that Psellos makes it clear in his homily on the Crucifixion that he is not writing about new forms of art: *Orat. hag.* 197.869–872.

[3] Belting (1994) 267. Belting's analysis draws on Maguire (1981), especially 53–83.

strand uses the rhetorically infused writings of Michael Psellos to provide a more philosophically grounded terminology for this artistic phenomenon. The key text employed by Belting is Psellos' homily on the Crucifixion, but as we shall see, the term is used widely throughout Psellos' many writings on works of art. Here, Belting argues that the idea of "living painting" allows Psellos to define a new manner of painting that can convey the paradoxes inherent in the representation of a crucified God who is both living and lifeless. Above all, the image must be lifelike, in order to encourage an appropriate response on the part of the beholder.[4]

In a recent essay, Robin Cormack has posed important questions regarding Belting's correlation of art and rhetoric. Most importantly, he reminds us that Psellos is writing about the reception rather than the production of works of art.[5] Rather than following in these footsteps, I would like to offer a slightly different reading of Psellos' texts, one that emphasizes the philosophical over the rhetorical framing of Psellos' thought. I will argue that the term "living painting" expresses a particular desire on the part of Psellos for what might be called an authentic presence that is mediated by the painting, but that is not the product of the work of art. From this understanding, I will question whether it is appropriate to apply the concept of art developed by Psellos to the description of the stylistic development of the art of this period. Instead, I will argue that Psellos was describing a phenomenon that was entirely a product of his discursive needs and that we should be wary of using his thoughts to narrate the production of the artistic forms in play in the eleventh- and twelfth centuries.

When we turn to the writings of Michael Psellos, we find that he presents himself as "a most fastidious viewer of icons,"[6] and that he does indeed from time to time offer seemingly exacting descriptions of a painting's surface. And yet, as one reads his accounts of looking at icons, whether these be real, imaginary, or somewhere in between, his connoisseur's gaze becomes less certain. Doubts creep in, as Psellos draws our attention to the all too human limits of our

[4] Belting (1994) 269–271.

[5] Cormack (2003) 238. Belting is also concerned with reception, but places a stronger emphasis upon the image in the formation of this reception, Belting (1994) 269.

[6] Translated at Cutler (1992) 27. The text is from *Letter* 194 (Kurtz and Drexl) 220.19.

acts of looking. In his desire for an authentic presence in the painting, he has to break the bounds of what we might recognize as a representational mode of thinking, and to exchange his gaze for a glance that may be defined as a look that is at once temporal, spatial, and partial. By these means Psellos draws our attention to the very real limits of the visible.

Something of this is captured in his *Discourse on the Crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ.* This text was central to Belting's case and therefore deserves lengthy scrutiny. The *Discourse* can be considered a wide-ranging spiritual treatise that among other themes used an identification on the part of the listener with the crucified Christ as a model for redemption.[7] The last section of the *Discourse* introduced an *ekphrasis* of an icon of the Crucifixion.[8] Significantly, but not unusually, the icon is introduced as a condescension to those who cannot achieve spiritual participation by words alone, but still depend upon the corporeal senses to know things.[9]

This correlation of the icon, the senses, and the body is strongly reiterated in an extended and alarmingly forensic account of what the icon in the text shows of Christ's body, an account that runs to eighty lines in the most recent edition.[10] I can give you a taste of this fastidious viewing in the following brief quotation:

> But there is something more here, or rather this is a very work of nature, so that the picture seems to be the product not of art but of nature. For the belly protrudes a bit from the rest of the body, and its colors make it appear not level with the chest, but it has distended as is reasonable. For the organs within it force out the belly, and the skin itself has been stretched at the navel. The heart, liver and whatever naturally branches from there, namely blood vessels and the [membranes] containing the lung or rather both lungs are concealed from the viewer. But if the entry point of the wound in his side had not already closed, we would perhaps have observed through it what I mentioned as if through a dilator.

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[7] *Orat. hag.* 116–198. A lengthy French summary of the text can be found at Gautier (1991) 16–24.

[8] Fisher (1994) 51–55 offers a complete English translation of this section. I have modified some of Fisher's readings in what follows.

[9] *Orat. hag.* 186.634–187.639. This can be translated: "At any rate, you observe with the intelligible eye of your soul that day by day [Christ] is made all things, so that he might make you a participant both in his sufferings and in his glory. Nevertheless, you have not entirely relinquished sense perceptions nor have you altogether risen above the body, but you long to gaze upon him with your very eyes."

[10] *Orat. hag.* 188.675–192.755.

> Ἐνταῦθα δέ τι καὶ πλέον ἐστί, μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον τῆς φύσεως, ἵνα μὴ τέχνη ἀλλὰ φύσει ἡ γραφὴ νομισθῇ· ἐπαναβέβηκε γάρ τι τὸ λοιπὸν ἡ γαστὴρ σῶμα καὶ οὐκ ἐξίσωται τοῖς στήθεσιν ὥσπερ ἐν χρώμασιν, ἀλλ᾽ εἰκότως διώγκωτο· ἐξωθεῖ γὰρ αὐτὴν τὰ ὑποκείμενα σπλάγχνα, καὶ αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ σκῦτος τὴν ῥίζαν εὐρύτερον πέπλασται. μήποτε οὖν ὑποκέκρυπται τῷ ὁρωμένῳ καὶ καρδία καὶ ἧπαρ καὶ ὅσα ἐντεῦθεν ἀποφύεται, τὰ μὲν αἵματα, τὰ δὲ περιεκτικὰ πνεύματος ἢ ἀμφοῖν τοῖν μεροῖν. ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν μὴ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν πλευρὰν τραύματος τὸ στόμα ἤδη συμμέμυκεν, ἴσως ἂν ἐκεῖθεν ὥσπερ ἐκ διόπτρας τὸ ὑπονοούμενον διωπτεύσαμεν.[11]

It is apparent that in his writing here Psellos wished to emphasize the physicality of the depicted body.[12] One can find a telling echo of this in Letter 211 which was written to an unknown *sakellarios* and in which we hear this:

> For the image [perhaps a Crucifixion or a Man of Sorrows] in no way differs from its model, so it seems to me at any rate. Hence I have often touched the paint, as I would the body. And my hand was not deceived, but agreed with my belief.
>
> ἡ μὲν γὰρ εἰκὼν οὐδὲν τοῦ παραδείγματος διενήνοχεν, ὡς γέ μοι δοκεῖ. ἔγωγ᾽ οὖν καὶ ὡς σώματος πολλάκις ἡψάμην τοῦ χρώματος· καί μοι ἡ χεὶρ οὐκ ἐψεύσατο, ἀλλὰ τῇ δόξῃ συνηκολούθησεν.[13]

In both instances, the emphatic physicality of his account of these images is governed by Psellos' need to prepare us for one half of his dual conception of the icon, namely the physical limits of the visible. Psellos is interested in the depiction of the body, because it helps him to define what art can do. It also allows him to begin to define what art cannot do.

I can begin to build this last point by looking at the manner in which the extended description of the body on the cross is framed by specific statements that place precise limits on what painting can convey. The first of these reads: "gaze upon the living dead [Christ]: for the clarity of the likeness is in the body rather than the soul (ἀρκεῖ γὰρ τῷ σώματι ἀντὶ ψυχῆς τῆς ἐμφερείας τὸ ἐναργές)."[14] The second reads: "Such, you see, is the Lord's body, so exact, so clear,

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[11] Fisher (1994) 52; *Orat. hag.* 189.701–190.712.

[12] Note the interesting discussion of the role of the body in Psellos's writing in the *Chronographia* offered at Kaldellis (1999) 154–166.

[13] Cutler (1992) 22–23; *Letter* 211 (Kurtz and Drexl) 247.19–23.

[14] Fisher (1994) 52; *Orat. hag.* 188.676–677.

so alive and dead, such that it does not repeat a model, but serves as a model for all else (τοιοῦτον μέν σοι τὸ δεσποτικὸν σῶμα, οὕτως ἀκριβές, οὕτως ἐναργές, οὕτως ἔμψυχον καὶ νεκρόν, ὡς μὴ αὐτὸ πρὸς παράδειγμα ἀναφέρεσθαι, τὰ δέ γε λοιπὰ πρὸς τοῦτο ὡς πρὸς παράδειγμα)."[15] One of the values introduced by the eighty lines of detailed description here is the sense that an image must aspire to be a clear and exacting likeness of things seen in the world, in this instance Christ's body. Resting on a long tradition in Byzantine and earlier thought Psellos here reiterates the notion that art makes available the visible traits of a given subject.[16]

Yet Psellos was not satisfied by this limited account of the icon's possibility. While likeness can convey that which is visible, he also notes that likeness does not belong to the soul. This brings Psellos to the second aspect of the icon that concerns him. Namely, to ask how it is possible for a painting to convey the invisible, particularly that which pertains to the divine and the soul? It is here that the notion of "living painting," *empsychos graphe*, literally en-souled or animate painting comes to play its role in Psellos' writing. It becomes his means of grappling with the possibilities of both likeness and unlikeness in the icon.

The idea of "living painting" can be introduced in a lengthy text from the *Discourse on the Crucifixion*:

> But that the painting is exact as regards the accuracy of art "is plain from the complexion," said a philosopher.[17] However, the marvel lies not in this, but in the fact that the whole image seems to be living (*empsychosthai*) and is not without a share of motions. If one will but direct one's gaze to the parts of the picture one after another, it might seem to him that some might alter, some might increase, some might change, while some [seem] to experience or make a difference, as if presently waxing or waning. Hence the dead body [seems] apparently to be both living and lifeless. The outlines of such a painting might be seen even in images [produced] by the artless—namely a similar straightening, breaking, or bending [of limbs], an illusion of life by

[15] Fisher (1994) 53; *Orat. hag.* 192.751–755.

[16] For the basis of this position in ninth-century iconophile theory see Barber (2002) 107–123. For its continuing value in the eleventh century see the writings of Eustratios of Nicaea. The most useful introduction to Eustratios's writings on art remains Stephanou (1946) 177–199. I will offer a fuller analysis in my forthcoming study theories of art in eleventh-century Byzantium: *Art and Understanding*.

[17] This is the response by the dying Pherecydes to a question regarding his health asked by Pythagoras (see *Clavis patrum graecorum* 2.130.17).

virtue of blood or of death by virtue of pallor—but these are all, so to speak, imitations of models and likenesses of likenesses. But here these things do not seem to take their existence from colors, rather the whole thing resembles nature, which is living and artlessly set in motion, and no one is able to discover whence the image has become like this. But, just as beauty exists as a result of the opposition and harmony of limbs and parts, and yet often a woman is extraordinarily radiant as a result of entirely different causes, so it is in this case. While this living painting (*empsychos graphe*) exists as a result of component parts combined most felicitously, the entire living form seems to be beyond this, so that life exists in the image from two sources, from art which makes a likeness and from grace which does not liken to anything else. Is this then a comparison of images and shadows? Yet I would not compare this painting to any other paintings, neither those set up by past hands or that represented the archetype accurately, nor those from our own time or from a little before that had made some innovations in form. I declare that this picture to be like my Christ in times past, when a bloodthirsty crowd brought out a vote of condemnation against him to a submissive Pilate. Thus, it seems to me that Christ hangs in the delineated and colored likeness. And I would not dispute that there is a higher oversight with respect to the painter's hand together with the overseeing mind had returned that painting to its prototype.

Ἀλλ' ὅτε μὲν πρὸς ἀκρίβειαν τῆς τέχνης ἠκρίβωται ἡ γραφή, χρῷ δῆλον, ἔφησέ τις σοφός· ἔστι δὲ τὸ θαυμαζόμενον οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν, ἀλλὰ τῷ δοκεῖν ἐμψυχῶσθαι σύμπασαν τὴν εἰκόνα καὶ μηδεμιᾶς ἀμοιρεῖν τῶν κινήσεων. εἰ γοῦν ἐπερείσει τις τοῖς μέρεσιν ἐφεξῆς ταύτης τὰ ὄμματα, τὰ μὲν αὐτῷ ἠλλοιῶσθαι δόξειε, τὰ δὲ ηὐξῆσθαι, τὰ δὲ μεθίστασθαι, τὰ δ' ἄλλο τι πάσχειν ἢ ποιεῖν, ὥσπερ ἄρτι φυόμενα ἢ φθίνοντα, οὕτω καὶ τὸν νεκρὸν αὐτῆς ἔμψυχον καὶ τὸ δοκοῦν οὕτως ἄψυχον ἀκριβῶς· τὰ γάρ τοι τῆς τοι αὑτης γραφῆς σχήματα κἂν ταῖς ἀτέχνοις τῶν εἰκόνων ἴδοι τις ἄν, τὸ οὕτως ὀρθοῦσθαι ἢ κεκλάσθαι, τὸ συγκεκάμφθαι, τὸ δοκεῖν αἵματι ζῆν ἢ αὖθις τεθνᾶναι τῷ ὠχριακέναι, ἀλλ' εἰσὶν ἅπαντα τύπων, ὡς ἄν τις εἴποι, μιμήματα καὶ εἰκασμάτων εἰκάσματα. ἐνταῦθα δὲ οὐκ ἐκ χρωμάτων τὰ τοιαῦτα δοκεῖ συνεστάναι, ἀλλ' ἔοικε τὸ σύμπαν ἐμψύχῳ φύσει καὶ ἀτεχνῶς κινουμέῃ, καὶ οὐδὲ δύναταί τις εὑρεῖν ὁπόθεν οὕτω γεγένηται ἡ εἰκών. ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τὸ κάλλος ἐξ ἀντιλογίας μέν ἐστι καὶ εὐαρμοστίας μελῶν καὶ μερῶν, οπλλάκις δὲ καὶ ἡ ἐκ μὴ οὕτω δοκούντων ἔχειν ὑπερφυῶς ἀπολάμπει, οὕτω δὴ κἀνταῦθα. ἔστι μὲν ἡ ἔμψυχος αὕτη γραφὴ ἐκ τῶν οἷς σύγκειται συντεθειμένων ὡς ἄριστα, τὸ δ' ὅλον ἔμψυχον εἶδος καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦτο δοκεῖ, ὡς εἶναι τῇ εἰκόνι διχόθεν τὸ ζῆν, τῷ τε κατὰ τέχην ἐξωμοιῶσθαι καὶ τῷ κατὰ χάριν ἑτέρῳ μὴ ἐοικέναι. τί τοίνυν καὶ εἰκόνων καὶ σκιῶν ἐστι σύγκρισις; ἀλλ' ἐγὼ ταύτην δὴ τὴν γραφὴν οὐ πρὸς ἑτέρας γραφὰς παραβάλοιμι, οὔτ' εἴ τινες τῶν τῆς ἀρχαίας χειρὸς τοιαύτας ἀνεστηλώκασιν ἢ πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον ἀκριβῶς ἀπεικόνισαν, οὔτε μὴν εἴ τινες τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἢ τῶν ὀλίγου πρὸ ἡμῶν

ἔνιοι τοιαῦτα εἴδη ἐκαινοτόμησαν· αὐτῷ δ᾽ ἐκείνῳ τῷ ἐμῷ χριστῷ ἀπεοικέναι ταύτην φημί, ὁπηνίκα Πιλάτῳ παραχωρήσαντι ἡ κατ᾽ αὐτοῦ ψῆφος τῷ φονῶντι λαῷ ἐξενήνεκτο. οὕτω γοῦν μοι κἀκεῖνος ἀπῃωρῆσθαι δοκεῖ ἐν ὁμοίῳ τῷ σχήματι, ἐν ὁμοίῳ τῷ χρώματι· καὶ οὐκ ἂν διαμφισβητήσαιμι ὡς κρείττων ἐπιστασία τὴν τοῦ ἐξεικονίσαντος χεῖρα μετὰ καὶ τοῦ ἐπιστατοῦντος νοὸς πρὸς τὴν πρωτότυπον ἐκείνην ἀνήνεγκε γραφήν.[18]

This passage makes a number of fundamental points that need to be underlined.

First, the image is said to come from two sources. The first of these is art (τέχνη), which Psellos defines as the human process of "making a likeness." The second source is grace (χάρις), which is defined a little more obscurely as that which "does not liken to anything else."

Second, a particular thread of naturalism runs through Psellos' account of this icon. The theme has already been found in the first passage introduced above. There the icon was described as being "the product not of art but of nature." Here in our most recent passage, the icon "resembles nature." In both instances the proximity to nature is more than a simple mimesis of the forms of the natural world. It is that which enlivens this painting and which is used to define the image as being more than a product of the technical skills of the artist.

This leads to the third point. For Psellos, the second point of origin for the work of art lies beyond the visible horizon. He states that: "while this living painting exists as a result of component parts combined most felicitously, the entire living form seems to be beyond this, so that life exists in the image from two sources," and then that an "overseeing mind had returned that painting to its prototype."

Finally, a fourth point can be made. It is this combination of the natural and the supernatural, the human and the divine, that make this icon distinct. This claim does not lead to a new style in painting or to a new iconographic language. Psellos specifically rejects this when he states that: "I would not compare this painting to any other paintings, neither those set up by past hands or that represented the archetype accurately, nor those from our own time or from a little before that had made some innovations in form." Thus neither traditional nor innovative practices in painting are a sufficient foundation for "living painting." This lies beyond the limits of human making.

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[18] Fisher (1994) 55; *Orat. hag.* 195.843–197.879.

Taken together these four points allow us to define what a "living painting" can be. It is a work of art that has surpassed the normal technical limits of the domain of art thanks to the intervention of the supernatural. A "living painting" thus presents both the natural and the supernatural together, linking the human and the divine in the work of art.

Psellos is not, however, entirely satisfied with this description. He has had to lean upon the notion of the inspired artist to account for the particular qualities of this painting that he seeks to define:

> Although this suffering brings him [Christ] in due course to death, the power that moves the hand of the artist also animates the body that has breathed its last. Thus he has been distinguished from those living among the dead, and from the dead who live among the living. For his veiled limbs are somewhat ambiguous, and the visible parts are no less doubtful. Just as art shrouds it also discloses both the lifeless and the living. This is true of his bloody garments, whether light or dark, as well as of the living dead presented on the cross and clearly suffering an excessive death, now living because of the accuracy of imitation—or rather, then and now in both manners. But there his life is beyond nature and his death is beyond pain. Here both are beyond the art and the grace that has shaped the art.
>
> καὶ τὸ μὲν πάθος αὐτίκα τοῦτον ποιεῖ τεθνήξεσθαι, ἡ δὲ τὴν τοῦ ζωγράφου κινήσασα χεῖρα πρὸς τοῦτο δύναμις αὐτὸ μᾶλλον ψυχοῖ τὸ ἐκπεπνευκός· οὕτως αὐτὸν ἐν μὲν νεκροῖς ζῶντα, ἐν δὲ ζῶσι νεκρὸν ἀπειργάσατο· τά τε γαρ κεκαλυμμένα αὐτῷ τῶν μελῶν οὕτως εἰσὶν ἐπαμφότερα, καὶ τὰ φαινόμενα οὐδὲν ἧττον ἀμφίβολα· ἄμφω γὰρ ἄψυχά τε καὶ ἔμψυχα, ὅσα τε ἡ τέχνη συνέστειλεν καὶ ὅσα ἠνέῳξεν· οὕτως οἱ χιτῶνες τοῦ αἵματος, οὕτως εἴ τι λευκόν, οὕτως εἴ τι τοῦ μέλανος, οὕτω νεκρὸς μὲν ζῶν δὲ καὶ τῷ σταυρῷ παριστάμενος, καὶ τῷ ὑπερβάλλοντι τῶν ἀλγηδόνων ἀκριβῶς τεθνηκώς, ἔμψυχος δὲ νῦν τῷ ἀκριβεῖ τῆς μιμήσεως, ἢ μᾶλλον καὶ τότε ἄμφω καὶ νῦν οὕτως. ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ τὸ μὲν ζῆν παρὰ τὴν φύσιν, τὸ δὲ θανεῖν παρὰ τὴν ὀδύνην· ἐνταῦθα δὲ καὶ τοῦτο κἀκεῖνο παρὰ τὴν τέχνην ἢ τὴν χάριν ἧς ἡ τέχνη τετύχηκε.[19]

Art is said both to shroud and to disclose its subject. As such the visible itself has become ambiguous. The imitation allows us now to see Christ as both living and dead. The vivid and kinetic rendering in the icon has been made possible by the gracious power that has moved the artist's hand. But ultimately his life and death are both

[19] Fisher (1994) 53–54; *Orat. hag.* 193.786–194.800.

beyond the art and the grace that shaped it. It is unsurprising that in the next passage in the text he then asks: "What then, has this discourse checked your desire (τί οὖν, ἵστησί σοι τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ὁ λόγος)?"[20] By which he appears to be asking whether his evocation of the icon has allowed viewers to lay aside their desire for a complete presence in the image.[21]

Despite these problems, Psellos invests heavily in the presence of the spiritual in the icon. The key to this lies in the movement that he sees in the icon.[22] However, the possibilities that lie in this are not fully realized in the Crucifixion icon. We are told that: "the whole image seems to be living and is not without a share of motions. If one will but direct one's gaze to the parts of the picture one after another, it might seem to him that some might alter, some might increase, some might change, while some [seem] to experience or make a difference, as if presently waxing or waning. Hence the dead body [seems] apparently to be both living and lifeless." Prefaced by the disclaiming phrase "it might seem to him," Psellos here invites us to see that the icon is not a static object, but is rather a thing whose forms move and change.[23] As such, he is able to evoke the experience of one looking at this paradoxical subject and its ambiguous representation the icon. Yet, the account of movement found here remains bound by the object and the traces that record the actions of art and grace. It cannot bring the spiritual into this icon.

Ultimately, the discussion of the Crucifixion images has allowed Psellos to define an understanding of the possibility of presence in the work of art, without seeing that expectation fulfilled by the object to hand, which has remained trapped by the conditions of its making.

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[20] *Orat. hag.* 194.801.

[21] A similar ambiguity is expressed in Psellos's account of the failure of both words and images in *Letter* 211 (Kurtz and Drexl) 249.1–8: "How then does the truth spoken in a discourse differ from a shadow? But when you approach your iconic shape it is the same. But if you think about my lines and should you comprehend the appropriate inappropriateness, the living confusion, and the uniform singularity of the words, perhaps you will even call the discourse in colour a shadow."

[22] This interest in movement and change is fundamental to Psellos's aesthetic. Its ultimate source resides in Alexander of Aphrodisias's third-century commentary on Aristotle's "On Sense Perception." This dependence and its implications will be discussed more fully in my forthcoming study on *Art and Understanding*.

[23] This important point is made in Papaioannou (2001) 186–188. One might note that there are other problematic instances of the appearance of the Virgin at the Blachernai: Rydén (1976) 63–82.

To find a resolution of the possibilities raised by the *Discourse on the Crucifixion* we need to turn to a second text, the *Discourse on the Miracle that Happens at the Blachernai*.[24] This *Discourse* addresses the regular miracle that took place every Friday evening in the church of the Theotokos at *Blachernai* in Constantinople. The miracle is well known. As the sun set, the entire church was emptied of people and the doors were closed. After appropriate rites had been performed in the narthex, the crowd was allowed to re-enter the church. It was at this moment that the veil that hung in front of an icon of the Theotokos lifted, making the image visible. The veil would then remain hanging in this raised position until the ninth hour on Saturday. While Psellos credited the Holy Spirit with lifting the veil, his interest was more taken by the changing appearance of the icon:

> [S]imultaneously the shape of the Maiden of God changes, as, I believe, it receives her living visitation and signifies the invisible in the visible. For her son and God who was hanging on the cross, the veil of the temple was rent in order to either manifest the truth hidden in the figures, or to invite the faithful into the innermost sanctuaries and so remove the wall that separates us from becoming intimate with God. For the Mother of God the sacred veil is ineffably raised, so that within she may hold the entering crowd to her chest as in a new innermost sanctuary and inviolate refuge.
>
> συνεξαλλάσσεται δὲ τῷ τελουμένῳ καὶ ἡ μορφὴ τῆς θεόπαιδος, οἶμαι, δεχομένη τὴν ἔμψυχον ἐπιδημίαν αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ ἀφανὲς φαινομένῳ ἐπισημαίνουσα. τῷ μὲν οὖν υἱῷ αὐτῆς καὶ θεῷ ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἀπηωρημένῳ ῥήγνυται τὸ τοῦ ναοῦ καταπέτασμα, ἵν᾽ ἢ τὴν ἐγκεκρυμμένην τοῖς τύποις ἐμφήνῃ ἀλήθειαν, ἢ ἔνδον τῶν ἀδύτων τοὺς πιστεύσαντος προσκαλέσηται καὶ ἀνέλῃ τὸ διατείχισμα τῆς πρὸς θεὸν ἡμῶν οἰκειώσεως· τῇ δέ γε θεομήτορι ὁ ἱερὸς πέπλος ἀπορρήτως ἐξαίρεται, ἵν᾽ ἔνδον ἑαυτῆς τὸ εἰσιὸν πλῆθος κατακολπίσηται ὥσπερ ἐν καινῷ τινι ἀδύτῳ καὶ ἀσύλῳ καταφυγῇ.[25]

This unveiling of the image is an event, an instant in which the icon becomes the site for the "living visit" of the Mother of God. She becomes wholly present in and through the icon. She *is there* at the *moment* of the miracle. This full presence is marked, significantly, by a change of appearance in the icon. We are told that this change has arisen because that which is normally invisible has become visible in what can be seen.

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[24] *Orat. hag.* 199–229.
[25] *Orat. hag.* 205.136–206.146.

An explanation of this transformation can be found toward the end of this complex discourse. Here the necessity of motion is brought forward in a lengthy philosophical reflection on the miracle.[26] Building upon a set of pagan examples and the Neoplatonic assumption that lesser things participate in the higher, Psellos argued that the participation was manifested by change in the thing seen.[27]

Hence:

> Some beings are precisely that, truly beings, divine and extraordinary, while others are inferior to those, and the subordinate reaches down as far as sense and matter itself, and the bodies receive some manifestation of better things. For the inferior is a participant in the higher. While the divine is like unto itself and entirely without change, everything sublunar is unlike and changeable, and as the descent proceeds, this condition deepens. The inferior receives illumination from superior things, not as they are, but as it is able. Divinity is unmoving, but whenever the illumination proceeds hence to the body, this body has moved. For it does not receive the manifestation without change, as this would be impossible. The creating force is shapeless, while the thing that receives the creative force receives some shape and alteration.
>
> ὅτι τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν αὐτὸ δὴ τοῦτο ὄντα εἰσὶ καὶ θεῖα καὶ ὑπερφυῆ, τὰ δ' ἐλάττω τούτων, καὶ καταβαίνει ἡ ὕφεσις μέχρις αἰσθήσεως καὶ ὕλης αὐτῆς, καὶ δέχεται τὰ τῇδε σώματα ἐμφάσεις τῶν κρειττόνων τινάς· μέτοχα γὰρ τὰ ἐλάττω τῶν κρειττόνων ἐστί· καὶ τὸ μὲν θεῖον ὅμοιον ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἀπαθέστατον, τὸ δ' ὑπὸ τὴν σελήνην ξύμπαν ἀνόμοιόν τε καὶ παθητόν, καὶ ὅσῳ πρόεισιν ἡ κάθοδος, βαθύνει τὸ πάθος. δέχεται δὲ καὶ τὰ χείρω τὰς ἐλλάμψεις τῶν ὑπερτέρων, οὐχ ὡς ἐκεῖνα ἔχει, ἀλλ' ὡς ταῦτα δύναται. τὸ μὲν οὖν θεῖον ἀκίνητον, ὅταν δὲ ἔλλαμψις ἐκεῖθεν προχωποίῃ τῷ σώματι, κεκίνηται τοῦτο· οὐ γὰρ ἀπαθῶς τὴν ἔμφασιν δέχεται, μὴ δυνάμενον· καὶ τὸ μὲν ποιοῦν ἄμορφον, τὸ δὲ πάσχον μορφὴν ποιὰν καὶ ἀλλοίωσιν δέχεται.[28]

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[26] *Orat. hag.* 226.660–229.733.

[27] To this point in this essay, I have not drawn attention to every instance in which Psellos's conception of art echoes strands of Neoplatonic thought. These references are allusive rather than precise, suggesting Psellos's immersion in these modes of thought. Let the passage quoted in the text here serve to underscore the point that Psellos's aesthetic attitude is grounded in a Neoplatonism that ably negotiates the physical world of Aristotelian tradition and the theological language of Platonism. Here Psellos aptly deploys a Proclean account of the inferior's participation in the superior in order to define a basis for the changeable quality of the miraculous icon that interests him. For example, we find this in proposition 173 of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*: "Each principle participates its superiors in the measure of its natural capacity, and not in the measure of their being."

[28] *Orat. hag.* 226.676–227.689.

This provides a model in which we can see that the icon must be seen to change if it is truly to manifest divine beings. If the icon is to make the divine being fully available then the medium of its manifestation must necessarily be changed in the process. This would be everything that is not a visible trait of the subject's body. In this case, the Mother of God's essential (as opposed to formal) humanity and also her holiness, which is to say her participation in divinity. As a saint in Byzantium she has become a participant in the divine. For the Mother of God to be there in the icon, these other aspects of her being need to be presented at the moment of the miracle. It is only thus that the spectator can truly see the Mother of God in her entirety. Such a visit is manifested by a necessary change in that which is already in the icon, namely the formal traces of the Mother of God's body.

In this text, Psellos has chosen to compare the Theotokos' icon with pagan oracles.[29] He cites those of Zeus at Dodona, Apollo at Delphi, Amphiaraus at Oropos among others. In describing these oracles he points to their ambiguous nature and to the evidence of trickery or human interference that can be found. He does this in order to show that the Christian oracle is better than its pagan predecessors. Central to this claim is his understanding that pagan oracles were mediated or indirect experiences, rather than the unmediated experience of the divine being that was available in miraculous icons. For Psellos, the Theotokos at the Blachernai was a real presence. When the veil lifted or the image was seen to move, it was unambiguous testimony of her being there.[30] Hence:

> [B]ut even these are less than the manifestations and overshadowings of the Theotokos. For their manifestation was unclear, their color variegated, their symbolism not at all apparent. But here, what was moved for the sake of truth was something immovable, what appeared something meet for a god, what was thought something supernatural.
>
> ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῦτα ἥττω τῶν τῆς θεοτόκου ἐμφανειῶν καὶ ἐπισκιάσεων· ἐκεῖνα μὲν γὰρ ἀσαφῆ τὴν δήλωσιν ἔσχε καὶ τὸ χρῶμα μετεποικίλλετο καὶ τὸ φαινόμενον σύμβολον οὐ πάνυ τι κατάδηλον ἦν· ἐνταῦθα δὲ ἀμετακίνητον τὸ κινούμενον περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ θεοπρεπὲς μὲν τὸ φαινόμενον, ὑπερφυὲς δὲ τὸ νοούμενον.[31]

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[29] *Orat. hag.* 213.356–218.465.
[30] *Orat. hag.* 214.368–370.
[31] *Orat. hag.* 217.425–431.

It is apparent therefore that Psellos needs to see change in this oracular icon.[32] For him, such an alteration in the surface of the image is the manifestation of an authentic presencing of the subject that is necessary for Psellos' iconic discourse.

Yet, this Blachernai text presents difficulties. Unlike the detailed description of Christ's body in the icon found in the text of the *Discourse on the Crucifixion*, the account of the Blachernai icon is notably reticent concerning the specific appearance of its own icon.[33] Given that Psellos' *Discourse on the Miracle* text is one of our lengthiest Greek discussions of this icon this is a disappointment. It is a lack that has contributed to the existence of a healthy, extensive and ongoing literature debating specific appearance of the icon that performed the miracle.[34] Even when Psellos introduces the symbolic value of color changes and of other marks in the final section of the *Discourse on the Miracle*, he does not specify whether these apply to the icon to hand. It is tempting to think that a color change does occur here, but the text is unclear.[35]

Given this lack of help, we ought to set these problematic speculations aside and instead ask why it is that Psellos emphasizes change in the appearance of the icon without truly addressing the nature of this change? This question becomes more urgent when we note that no other source (Greek, Latin, or Russian) that describes the usual Friday miracle at the Blachernai reports the change in the appearance of the icon that Psellos notes.[36] These other sources all

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[32] The point can be extended by consideration of the Antiphonetes image venerated by the Empress Zoe, where color changes in the icon are used for oracular purposes: *Chron.* 6.66; Mango (1959) 142–148; James (1996) 83–85; Duffy (1995) 88–90.

[33] Of course, one should be wary of the actual accuracy of such rhetorical "descriptions." Ekphrases remain a problematic source for art historians. On this one might James (1991) 1–17 and Maguire (1996).

[34] Papadopoulos (1928); Grumel (1931) 129–146; Seibt (1985) 549–564; Tognazzi Zervou (1986) 215–287; Cotsonis (1994): 225–227; Carr (1997) 91–95; Schulz (1998) 473–501; Pentcheva (2000) 35–54; Papaioannou (2001) 177–188.

[35] *Orat. hag.* 227.689–694. The operation of colors presented here appears to be generalized rather than specific.

[36] Anna Komnene, *Alex.* 13.2; Cyril Philotheos: Kataskepenos, *La Vie de Saint Cyrille* 83 and 305–306; Latin pilgrim 1075–1099: Ciggaar (1995) 117–140, esp. 121–122; *Liber Virginalis*: Grumel (1931) 130–131; John Beleth, *Rationale officiorum*: Grumel (1931) 133; Latin anonymous: Grumel (1931) 134–135; Ciggaar (1976) 211–67; William of Malmesbury, *De laudibus et miraculis Sanctae Mariae* 166–68; Russian: Antony of Novgorod: Grumel (1931) 141; Novgorod Chronicle: Grumel (1931) 141.

focus on the moment of unveiling, which they, like Psellos, attribute to the intervention of the Holy Spirit. The change in the appearance of the icon thus appears to be a distinct contribution on the part of Michael Psellos. I would like to suggest that his contribution to our knowledge of this icon is unique because it *has to say* the things that it does, not because he is reporting on a common perception of this icon. Psellos' aesthetic requires attention to the dual origins of these icons in the human and the divine, the natural and the supernatural. In order for an icon to be complete and to offer by means of participation the real presence of the one shown there, it must disclose the motion that is a sign of the presencing of the invisible supernatural being that has become visible and present here.[37]

It is apparent that Psellos' writing on art does not address all icons. He has set aside most art as a likeness of a likeness or the imitation of a model. Whether it is traditional or novel in form, it is still for him bound by the limits of the visible. While all art can seek to excel in its account of sensual data (and can thus appeal to our human eyes and touch), it is only extraordinary works that can be brought beyond this natural horizon and thence achieve participation in the supernatural. Such participation depends upon divine intervention and is independent of human action. This is what distinguishes his discussion of the Crucifixion icon from that of the Blachernai icon. While the Crucifixion painting can appear to be living, the Blachernai image is living. Participation depends upon divine intervention and is independent of human action. It is such interventions in our perception of the work, rather than the shaping hand of the artist, that bring forth instances of the "living painting" painting that Psellos seeks.

[37] In my forthcoming study on *Art and Understanding* I will expand upon this discussion of Psellos's aesthetics by examining his indebtedness to the Aristotelian tradition. This is a necessary and natural foundation for the more Neoplatonic themes examined in this essay.

PSELLOS' CONCEPTUAL PRECISION

David Jenkins

Michael Psellos expressed his admiration for Proclus of Athens on many occasions and even claimed, in a famous passage from the *Chronographia*, that he owed to him his "conceptual precision" as well.[1] E. R. A. Sewter translated this expression, νοήσεων ἀκρείβια, as the "exact interpretation of Proclus' theory of perception" though he did not provide a footnote that might have justified this elaboration.[2] If we take the expression to mean literally "conceptual precision," what was it about the thought of Proclus that led Psellos to believe that his concepts had become precise? And what effect, if any, did this precision have on some of the general themes of his thought?

For many years, an attempt to evaluate the philosophy of Michael Psellos beyond the confines of the *Chronographia* meant a long day with Paris BN ms. 1182. It has only been in the last twenty years that reliable editions of his many other works have become widely accessible in Teubner editions. These editions have allowed us to see how consistently Psellos expressed his abstract sensibility in almost everything he wrote. Certainly, the *Chronographia* and *Omnifaria Doctrina* are indispensable texts, but our attempt to appreciate Psellos' philosophical contribution can now be extended to his school lectures, to several dense digressions in his encomia and, finally, to his many letters that contain explicit philosophical arguments. Be that as it may, the integration of these additional witnesses will have to be qualified by the same circumspection that our tentative understanding of his chronology, context and intentions invariably requires whenever we approach the writings of Michael Psellos.

Proclus of Athens, who flourished in the fifth century, was of course the late great systematizer of Neoplatonism. In several long commentaries on Plato and in his deductive masterpiece, the *Elements of Theology*, Proclus attempted to describe the cosmic "Golden Chain"

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[1] *Chron.* 6:38.

[2] *Fourteen Byzantine rulers: the Chronographia of Michael Psellus* (1966) 174.

of Being that extended from the transcendent heights of the One to the abysmal depths of Matter. There is no real need to reiterate his importance for the thought of Psellos, who on different occasions referred to Proclus as great, wise and divine and even claimed that Proclus "brought Greek thought to its close with his own death."[3] It is well known how extensively Psellos borrowed from Proclus in the *Omnifaria Doctrina*, especially in discussing the Mind, where long passages are lifted directly from the *Elements of Theology*. In addition, Psellos often referred to the Golden Chain in an obviously Proclean manner, using it as the fundamental structure for his interpretations of scripture, Nazianzos and the Chaldean oracles alike.[4] But what was it about Proclus' systematic treatment of the Golden Chain that impressed Psellos as conceptually precise? My suggestion is that Psellos associated conceptual precision with the logical "middle" by means of which Proclus attempted to establish the formal continuity of the Chain's elements, an idea that Psellos refers to as the μίξις τῶν ἐναντιῶν, the mixture of opposites.[5]

Claiming to see this form as the structure of Proclus' Golden Chain is hardly surprising. It is widely acknowledged that Plato's triad of the Unlimited, Limited and the Mixed played a fundamental role in the structure of Neoplatonism. But it is not a claim without broad significance in the case of Michael Psellos. In my opinion, the dynamics of this mixed opposition form the philosophical context of Psellos' thought in general, and specifically, as we will see, of his conceptions regarding his own character, philosophy and rhetoric, mystical union and the person of the Emperor. We will also see that it is Psellos' convergence on the middle that characterizes his treatment of all of these themes.

Proclus' Neoplatonism is one of dense complexity, a system whose deductive relationships often lead to apparent contradiction. Attempts to simplify this complexity for the sake of comprehension risk ignoring logical necessities of broad consequence. On the other hand, a

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[3] Ἐπὶ τούτου Πρόκλος ὁ μέγας ἤνθει φιλόσοφος, ὃν ἐγὼ μετά γε Πλάτωνα τίθημι, ἀνὴρ Συριανοῦ μὲν μαθητὴς τοῦ σοφοῦ, ὑπερβαλὼν δὲ μακρῷ τὸν διδάσκαλον καὶ τὴν ἑλληνικὴν σοφίαν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ τέλει συμπερανάμενος. *Hist. syntomos* 52.36.

[4] See especially Περὶ τῆς χρυσῆς ἁλύσεως τῆς παρ' Ὁμήρῳ in *Phil min.* I.46.31–42; *Theol.* I.64.89–95; *Orat. pan.* 17.327–331.

[5] *Enc. in mat.* 148.1799; *Enc. in Xiphil.* 457.10; *Enc. in Cerull.* 341.4; *Phil. min.* I.51.683, 761.

degree of simplification might be warranted in the case of Psellos' appropriation of Proclus since that appropriation was itself clearly simplified. Not only had Pseudo-Dionysus recast Proclus in Christian terms, it could also be argued that Psellos recognized that many of these so-called logical necessities were no longer formally significant. There was no longer any reason to accept rationalizations that attempted to harmonize centuries of pagan religious practice; only what squared more or less with Orthodox dogma and Aristotelian logic need remain. Moreover, Psellos himself never wrote a systematic metaphysical treatise like Proclus, Damascius, Iamblichus or Plotinus. His most systematic treatment of philosophical problems is found in the *Omnifaria Doctrina*, which is primarily a handbook of paraphrases, often a word for word imitation, of not only Proclus, but of Plutarch, Aristotle, Plato, Olympiodorus and Simplicius. While Psellos undoubtedly read Proclus closely and was obviously careful how he cited and applied his teaching in public, his extant discussions of the Golden Chain operate on a more pedagogical than systematic level.

However we characterize Psellos' appropriation of Proclus' Golden Chain, he frequently associated the idea of conceptual or philosophical precision with a middle that linked two opposing elements.[6] Of the several passages that make this clear, the most concise is perhaps from a letter to a *protosynkellos*, whom Psellos was happy to call a kindred soul:[7]

> For each of our characters is made up of two parts, or rather, to be more philosophical about it, I should say, of three, of two opposite states and one from both; I liken you to this middle . . .

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[6] Praising John Xiphilinos' philosophical acumen: "He precisely expressed the mixture of opposites, of being and non-being, and guarded their union and distinctiveness even more precisely than Plato did in the Sophist . . ." *Enc. in Xiphil.* 457.10; congratulating a friend's wisdom: "But you alone are able to vary your wisdom, sometimes mixing the unmixed, at others keeping them separate in order to comprehend their opposite qualities. For you can either be exclusively philosophical or exclusively rhetorical or you can gather together differences and from opposites fashion a new and composite understanding." *Letter* 223 (Kurtz and Drexl) 265.1–6; and in his poem *On Medicine*: "This is the character of a precise mixture:/The symmetrical melody of bodies,/A nature midway between opposites . . ." *Poem.* 9.26.

[7] διττοῦ γὰρ ὄντος τοῦ χαρακτῆρος ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν, μᾶλλον δὲ τριττοῦ, ἵνα τι πλέον περὶ τούτου φιλοσοφήσω, ἔκ τε τῶν δύο ἐναντιῶν ἕξεων καὶ τῆς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, ἐγὼ μὲν ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς μέσης σε εἴκαζον . . . *Letter* 7 (Sathas) 232.19–22.

He was willing to hazard the application of this idea even to the Trinity when in clarifying the procession of the Holy Spirit in a lecture on Nazianzos he suggests that:[8]

> . . . many who are not precise with their concepts have missed this point. The confusion is cleared up by the idea of the middle. For uncreatedness and createdness are not without a middle so that the spirit is named by one of these two terms, but procession is their middle.

As I mentioned above, this μίξις τῶν ἐναντιῶν traces its articulate origin to the triad of the Limited, Unlimited and Mixed of Plato's *Philebus*. In Plotinus we see its outlines in his account of the Mind's creation in *Ennead* V.3.11, where the One out of its superabundance creates Being and so becomes Non-being in relation to its creation; Mind then follows as the return of Being to Non-being, a third element that is in some sense both. This dynamic application of the triad served as the basis for the Neoplatonic theory of causation, i.e., that every effect remains in, proceeds from, and returns to its own cause. Proclus, apparently following Iamblichus, used the triad in order to establish the continuity of beings in general. The blurring together of metaphysics, logic and ethics that we so typically see in Neoplationism is due largely to the pervasive application of this form.

Proclus' Golden Chain is a series of descending elements: the One, the Henads, Being, Life, Mind, Soul and Matter. Each of these elements is of two kinds: the prior "unparticipated" represents the pure transcendent or universal and corresponds to unity, whereas the subsequent "participated" allows the participation of particulars and corresponds to multiplicity.[9] The correlation between unparticipated and participated is meant to address Proclus' two most fundamental concerns, 1) that "every plurality in some way participates unity," and 2) that "every plurality is posterior to the One." It is also meant to ensure the absolute transcendence of the One and to avoid the Third Man argument that extends the relationship of a unity to its

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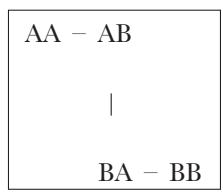
[8] τοῦτο δὲ πολλοὺς οἶμαι λανθάνειν τῶν μὴ τὰς ἐννοίας ἀκριβωσάντων. λέλυται δὲ αὐτῷ τὸ ἄπορον διὰ τῆς μεσότητος. οὐ γὰρ ἄμεσα ἀγεννησία τε καὶ γέννησις, ἵν' ἐν θατέρῳ τῶν ὀνομάτων τὸ πνεῦμα νομίζοιτο, ἀλλ' ἔστι μέσον αὐτῶν ἡ ἐκπόρευσις. *Theol.* I.68.117–121. For Psellos on the Trinity, see Gemeinhardt (2001).

[9] While The One and the Henads do not possess unparticipated and participated kinds, the One can be understood as the unparticipated correlate of the participated Henads. See *Inst.* 108 for the equation of the unparticipated with the universal and the participated with the particular.

particulars *ad infinitum*. The simultaneous movement between these elements is described as illumination or procession (πρόοδος) in descent from the One to Matter and as return (ἐπιστροφή) in ascent back to the One.

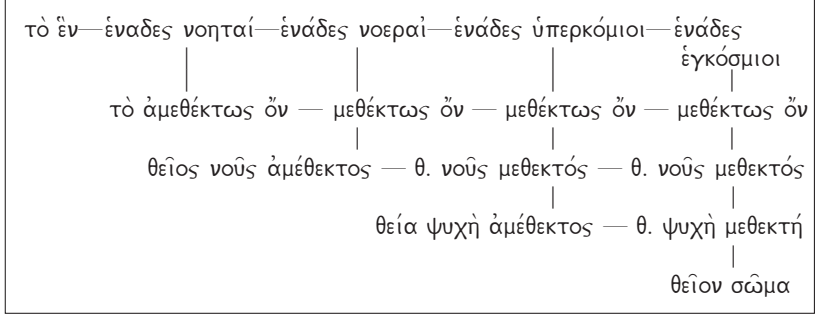
Proclus attempted to establish the continuity of this ascending and descending movement by means of a middle term that provided a shared likeness between two contiguous elements. Let us assume the necessary constituents of Proclus' logic: two series of elements, one higher and the other lower, and two kinds within each series, unparticipated and participated. If we assign the letter A to the higher series, B to the lower, and again A to an unparticipated kind and B to its participated correlate we see that our continuity is made up of four elements, AA (higher unparticipated), AB (higher participated), BA (lower unparticipated) and BB (lower participated). For example, the higher series of unparticipated and participated Mind must be continuous in some way with the lower series of unparticipated and participated Soul. If we assume that the continuity of these elements depends on the principle that "all reversion is accomplished through likeness of the reverting terms to the goal of reversion (prop. 32)," unparticipated Mind (AA) can only be continuous with participated Soul (BB) by means of other terms since these two elements are doubly disjunct, i.e., they share no likeness in series or kind.[10] If we then assume that 1) an unparticipated element of a higher order cannot be directly participated by any element of a lower (prop. 161) and 2) an unparticipated element is prior to its participated correlate (prop. 23), then lower BB returns to higher AA first through BA, in whose universality BB participates, and then through AB, which shares particularity with BB and universality with AA. These relationships can be represented in the following way:



[10] Prop. 175: "For nowhere does procession take place without mediation, but always through terms which are akin and alike." Prop. 29: "All procession is accomplished through a likeness of the secondary to the primary."

This form is in fact the basis of Proclus' description of the Golden Chain in propositions 162–165 of the *Elements of Theology*, represented by E. L. Dodds in the following diagram:[11]

Props. 162–5. the scheme of 'participation' implied in these propositions is as follows:

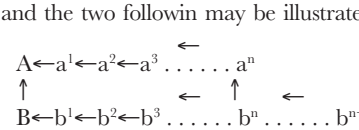


While these propositions account for all of the descending participated elements of the Neoplatonic cosmos (by means of which the *first* participant of a lower series is also continuous with the unparticipated of a higher through the higher's *second* participant, etc.), the unparticipated (ἀμέθεκτος) element of a lower series (BA) is only continuous with an unparticipated element of a higher (AA) by means of the first participated (μεθεκτός) higher element (AB). Proposition 166 immediately clarifies this alignment by stating that "of the *participated intelligences* (νοῦς) some irradiate the supra-mundane (ὑπερκόσμιοι) and *unparticipated soul*, others the intra-mundane (ἐγκόσμιοι)" (my italics).[12]

[11] Inst. 162–165 (p. 282 of the commentary). Diagram reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

[12] Inst. 166 (p. 145). Dodds diagrams an earlier discussion of this continuity at propositions 108–109 in a significantly different way (reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press):

Props. 108, 109 and the two followin may be illustrated diagrammatically thus:



Here a^1 a^2, &c. and b^1 b^2, &c. represent two successive transverse series or strata of reality proceeding from their respective 'monads' or universal terms A and B: Pr.'s point is that b^n may obtain knowledge of or contact with A either through B or through a^n.

Nevertheless, the direct participation of a lower unparticpated element (BA) with a higher participated seems to contradict the law of reversion through likeness (prop. 32) since these terms are themselves disjunct. Proposition 99 seems to anticipate this apparent contradiction by declaring that "every unparticipated term arises *qua* unparticipated from no other cause than itself . . . if there be superior terms from which it is derived, it proceeds from them not *qua* unparticipated but *qua* participant."[13] One could argue that this explanation only clarifies the contradiction. In fact, this apparent placing of a higher particular *before* a lower universal often drew the criticism of Nicholas of Methone, a twelfth century commentator, who complained that Proclus frequently placed multiplicity before unity in direct contradiction with the fundamental principle that declares otherwise.[14]

If we recast this notation into ours that represent the possible combinations of the two series and kinds, the diagram becomes:

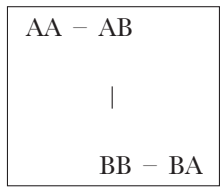
AA (*A*) – AB (a^n)	
|	|
BA (*B*) – BB (b^n)	

Dodds was certainly aware of the difference between his two representations, referring to the scheme of proposition 108 as "simpler" and the scheme of proposition 162 as "more elaborate." Nevertheless, how do we explain what appears to be their significant difference? I would argue that Dodds' diagram of prop. 108, if correct, represents an early phase of Proclus' reasoning that had to be modified to accommodate the principle that culminates in proposition 161, i.e., that an unparticipated higher (AA) cannot be directly participated by any member of a lower series. In addition, Dodds' diagram might simply be incorrect since Proclus seems to take care to clarify in propositions 108 and 109 that a lower particular participates in a higher universal either through its own universal or through the higher particular *that is co-ordinate with it* (ὁμοταγοῦς). In other words, the lower *first* particular is continuous with the higher universal through the higher's *second* particular, which is, according to the scheme of prop. 162, co-ordinate with the lower's *first* participant. Be that as it may, it should be mentioned that Dodds' graphic suggestion of two different kinds of relationships, one vertical, the other horizontal, has been seriously questioned. Stephen Gersh has pointed out that the two types of relationships suggested here are misleading and nowhere to be found in the texts of Neoplatonism ("In view of the enneadic structure explicitly worked out by Damascius and almost certainly implicit in Proclus, either both procession and remission would be 'vertical' or both 'horizontal' depending upon how they are represented graphically." Gersh (1978) 152). Also, it is clear that Proclus' use of the terms "series" (σειρά) and "order" (τάξις) is in many cases synonymous. Nevertheless, I would maintain, like Dodds, that it would be difficult to make sense of propositions 108 and 162 if we did not assume that series sometimes means the horizontal relationship between universal and particular in opposition to the vertical order of supra-adjacent (ὑπερκείμενον) elements (or vice versa).

[13] *Inst.* 99 (p. 89).

[14] *Inst.* 162–165 (p. 282 of the commentary).

If we recast our four elements assuming as propostion 99 does that the lower universal is a participant, we are left with the following alignment:



While arguably apparent both in the very first propositions of the *Elements of Theology* and in the subsequent explanations of participation itself, the inevitable identification of the final element as BA does present a problem given Proclus' explicit formulations in propositions 162–165. Even though the unparticipated lower element (BB) proceeds *qua* participant by virtue of its derivation from a superior term (AB), its first correlate is still a participated element, the first participant of the lower series, and we would expect that it too would be identified as BB. Proclus does not explicitly address this particular implication of saying that the unparticipated lower is also participated, but the identification of the final element as BA does at least make sense formally. Obviously, if the first three elements are clearly assigned as AA, AB and BB, the fourth must be BA.[15] And if we understand AA to be the One and the middle AB/BB to be the descending vertical relationships between each subsequent higher participated with a lower unparticipated, the final element, the lowest participated nature, stands alone, like the One, without a vertical correlate.[16] Be that as it may, the alignment of this scheme perhaps

[15] While the apparent priority of BB over BA in this scheme does seem to contradict the principle that the unparticipated of each series precedes its participated correlate, the problem might be resolved by understanding the direction of the movement from prior BA to subsequent BB as the return (ἐπιστροφή) and the direction of the movement from prior AA to subsequent AB as the procession (πρόοδος). Also, the two extreme terms in this scheme, AA and BA, though not doubly disjunct as variables, might still be understood to be so if we assume that their shared "unparticipation" is a disjunction by definition.

[16] Proposition 109 states that "every particular corporeal nature participates the universal Soul both through universal Nature and through a particular soul." In the following proposition Proclus adds that there are also "bare" intelligences, souls and natures that can only participate in the level above them through their own universal, i.e., they possess no vertical relation to a supra-adjacent particular. Since the lowest particular Nature would be "bare" nature "destitute of a soul's company"

best represents the fundamental paradox latent in Proclus' attempt to define the middle: series A and B are both discreet and continuous at the same time, both unparticipated and participated, related to one another in participation yet separate and unparticipated in their own identities. We see these distinctions set up in the first four propositions of the *Elements of Theology*:

1. Every manifold in some way participates unity
2. All that participates unity is both one and not-one
3. All that becomes one does so by participation of unity
4. All that is unified is other than the One itself

Here Proclus establishes right from the start that there are two distinct unities: the unparticipated One (AA) and the participated unity (AB); further, that there are two distinct multiplicities: the one which participates unity as the unified, (BB) and the other which remains discreet in its own identity as the not-one (BA). We see a similar understanding in proposition 81, where Proclus describes the relationship between two separate elements, the "participated" higher (AB) and the "participant" lower (BA) as requiring "a mean term to connect them, one which more nearly resembles the participated principle than the participant does, and yet actually resides in the latter (BB).[17] He concludes by saying that "an irradiation, proceeding from the participated to the participant, must link the two; and this medium of participation (BB) will be distinct from both (AB and BA)." Therefore, the mean term is thought of as both distinct from AB and BA and as possessing a resemblance to (or residing in) both. And finally, in propositions 23 & 24, which Louis Bréhier has called the "fundamental theorem of the treatise," namely, that the unparticipated produces the participated, which in turn is superior to the

(prop. 111) we can assume that it stands alone since, as the lowest level of being, it also possesses no lower unparticipated correlate. Dodds' diagram of prop. 162–165 does not include these unparticipated natures since the text of these propositions mentions only their unparticipated correlate, the θεῖον σωμα.

[17] δεῖ δή τινος αὐτοῖς μεσότητος συνεχούσης θάτερον πρὸς θάτερον, ὁμοιοτέρας τῷ μετεχομένῳ καίτοι ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ μετέχοντι οὔσης. *Inst.* 81 (p. 77). Dodds translates ὁμοιοτέρας as an comparative and supplies "than the participant does" to complete the sense. His translation suggests that the participated element of the middle is more like the participated than the participant element of the middle is like the participant since the participated is by definition of greater potency than the participant. On the other hand, translating ὁμοιοτέρας as an intensive would simply suggest that the participated element of the middle "closely resembles" the participated as a member of its series.

participant, Proclus summarizes his point by saying, "For, to express it shortly, the first is a unity prior to the many; the participated is within the many, and is one yet not-one; while all that participates is not-one yet one."[18] Reading this passage with the first four propositions in mind, we see that the "unity prior to the many" is the unparticipated One (AA); that the "participated within the many" is the unity which multiplicity participates (AB), an element that is one in its unity yet not-one in its being participated by multiplicity; and that "all that participates" is the unified that participates unity (BB), something not-one in its multiplicity and yet one in its participation of unity. The multiplicity that does not participate unity (BA) but remains separate in its own identity as the not-one is implied but not mentioned since by definition it is not participated or a participant.

If the possible combinations of these four necessary variables provide a framework within which to consider Proclus' attempt to conceptualize the continuity of being, how do they apply to the thought of Michael Psellos, who was undoubtedly familiar with the relevant propositions given his extensive use of the *Elements of Theology*? In his discussion of Mind in the *Omnifaria Doctrina*, where although at least half of his text is taken word for word from the *Elements of Theology*, Psellos opens with an emphatic paraphrase of his own:[19]

> Not every Mind is participated by Soul: the first Mind is not participated by Soul at all. For how could the Mind that is above all beings and the creator of all be participated by any Soul?

By asserting proposition 161 right from the start of his discussion, that a higher unparticipated is never directly participated by any lower, Psellos lays claim to Proclus' continuity as immediately described in propositions 162–165. Further, if we assume that the middle is best conceptualized as AB/BB, the "vertical" relation of these participated elements suggests that this middle is distinct from its "horizontal" correlates, unparticipated unity (AA) and discreet multiplicity (BA). This triadic form of four elements is in fact remarkably suggestive of Psellos' thought in general. First of all, by representing the horizontal relationship of AA with AB as above that of BA with BB,

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[18] *Inst.* 24 (p. 29; see p. 210 of the commentary for Bréhier's comment).

[19] Οὐ πᾶς νοῦς μετέχεται ὑπὸ πάσης ψυχῆς· ὁ δὲ πρῶτος νοῦς ὑπ' οὐδὲμιᾶς ψυχῆς μεθεκτός ἐστιν. ὁ γὰρ ὑπὲρ πάντα τα ὄντα νοῦς καὶ πάντων δημιουργὸς πῶς ἂν ὑπὸ ψυχῆς μετασχεθείη τινός; *Omni. doc.* 21.2–4.

the diagram suggests two levels of reality, one higher, the other lower. There are few oppositions as common in Psellos as τὰ κρείττονα, the higher, and τὰ χείρονα, the lower, a distinction which is of course consistent with Neoplatonism in its most general sense.[20] Second, the four elements of the form reflect Psellos' tendency to reduce the elements of the Golden Chain to that same number, to the One, Mind, Soul and Matter.[21] In the notation of our final diagram we would associate the One with AA (unparticipated unity), Matter with BA (discreet multiplicity), and Mind and Soul with the middle AB/BB (participated unity/participated multiplicity).[22] He also tends to identify the first two elements as members of a higher level, and the last two as members of a lower so that the One and Mind are coordinate above Soul and Matter.[23] The reduction of these elements to four, which we occasionally see even in Proclus, is likely due to the tendency to telescope the participated unity implied in both the Henads and Being into Mind, and the "movement" of Life into Soul.[24] This tendency becomes even more apparent in Psellos' successors, John Italos and Eustratios of Nicaea, whose attention to

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[20] This distinction is based fundamentally on the conviction that unity is logically implied in plurality but not vice versa.

[21] *Theol.* I.75.38–39; 64.93–95; 107.59–73; *Phil min.* I.46.70; *Letter* 188 (Sathas) 479.28–480.4.

[22] The identification of the One as AA and Matter as BA potentially suggests their direct participation through the shared likeness of their unparticipation, a conjunction, however, that prop. 161 seems to rule out. Nevertheless, Psellos was aware of this formal possibility and attributed it specifically to the Chaldeans. He defended the Proclean position in one of the more curious of his letters (*Letter* 101 [Kurtz and Drexl 1936] 130.1–7), where he begins his answer to an inquiry regarding the diaphragm by congratulating Hippocrates on the wisdom of his proverb that change only occurs gradually, ἐκ παραγωγῆς. This principle forms the basis for Psellos' anatomical rationalization of the diaphragm itself, that the organs of respiration cannot be connected to the organs of digestion without a middle in between them. The letter ends by an even further abstraction of the problem, where he writes:

> The oracles refer to Matter as being born of the Father, as if it came to be directly from the Creator without any intermediate creation. Since they call Matter being-less, mindless and lifeless they separate it from the creation of being, life and mind. However, we have filled the first Mind with the superabundant unity of the Father and then placed beneath it another Mind as the result of its own abundant overflow.

While later Neoplatonists would argue that Matter is a product of the One through the stages of "intermediate creation," they would also maintain that Matter is *only* a product of the One, since only the causative potency of the One extends as far as Matter. See Proclus *Inst.* 57–59 and Wallis (1972) 156.

[23] *De Greg. theol. char.* 51.16–21.

[24] Proclus *Inst.* 20.

Aristotle's logic results in replacing Mind and Soul with genus and form. And finally, the reduction of the form to its logically necessary elements naturally begins to suggest the form of the syllogism itself. There is no need to establish the importance of the syllogism for Michael Psellos; his defense of it in his famous letter to Xiphilinos should be sufficient.[25] The four elements of our diagram, each the possible combination of two variables, do mirror the same logical combinations of the four syllogistic propositions, the universal affirmative and negative and the particular affirmative and negative. In addition, the representation of two levels that share a middle is suggestive of the syllogistic figure, where a major and minor premise are connected by a common middle.

The paradox latent in the conceptual form of Proclus' middle perhaps suggests one other important characteristic of Psellos' thought. As Hans-Georg Beck has so well articulated, one cannot read Psellos for long without feeling his disillusionment about something fundamentally unresolved in his own thought.[26] Beck argues that for Psellos, like Pascal, the awareness that discursive thought cannot overcome its own implied duality results in a kind of tedious resignation. While the resolution of this duality might be sought in a middle that establishes a shared likeness, the difference that divides it remains: participated elements participate one another, but their unparticipated correlates do not. And this paradox extends to the middle itself since its own continuity can never be established as long as one of its variables differs. AB shares its B with BB, but its difference as A remains, and attempting to resolve this difference by means of another shared element will only extend *ad infinitum*. Like all of Zeno's dichotomous paradoxes, this seems annoyingly obvious, and anyone who had read Aristotle as closely as Psellos knew that the problem dissolves by recognizing that both magnitudes, time and distance,

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[25] *Epist. ad Xiphil.* 53.

[26] Beck (1983) 34–35: Anders bei Psellos. Hört man genau hin, dann sind Mißstimmungen und Enttäuschungen klar vernehmlich und eine gewisse Unruhe wird deutlich, auch wenn sie in der Regel von außen her bei ihm ausgelöst wird . . . Ich galube, daß dies genau dem Taedium der Literaten und Gelehrten entspricht: der Verdruß am Allerlei, das Allerlei bleibt und zu keiner Einheit findet und nach keiner Überhöhung strebt, der Punkt, an dem das ratiocinium unbefriedigt läßt, anders ausgedrückt, an dem der Denker erfährt, daß zwar, wie Pascal es ausgedrückt hat, der Mensch das diskursive Denken nicht entbehren kann, selbst aber doch kein diskursives Wesen ist. Hier eben scheint der Traum der Byzantiner, von denen die Rede war, nach einer höheren Theoria einzusetzen.

are infinitely divisible.[27] A series does in fact converge, and a particular existent does in fact exist by limiting infinite matter with its own form. Nevertheless, the awareness of matter's infinite divisibility pressures the middle of any discreet continuity with yet another middle.[28] This paradoxical force might help explain why Psellos not only converges on the middle but also tends to flatten the difference between higher and lower elements: as each subsequent middle diminishes the distance between its opposite elements, so too does their relative difference.

If a conceptualization of the middle shapes Psellos' thought in general we would expect to see its expression in the themes that drew his particular interest. It is not surprising then that we see this tendency first of all in declarations of his own self-awareness. He not only thinks between two opposites, he lives there as well.[29] Undoubtedly, the most famous of the many passages in which Psellos confesses his ambiguous nature is from a letter to an unnamed friend:[30]

> For I am a human being, a soul bound to a body. Therefore I take pleasure in both ideas and sensations. If someone places his soul above the body, he is both happy and blessed, but I would be content even if I lived half for the body.

An even better summation of his self-awareness is in a letter addressed to a judge in the theme of Opsikion:[31]

> I am neither completely separated from matter nor completely immersed in it, for I am partly divine while living with a body. And so I do

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[27] Psellos commented on Aristotle's Physics (*Commentarii in Physicen Aristotelis*, ed. G. B. Camozzi).

[28] See *Theol.* I.62.27–30: ἥ τε γὰρ ὕλη εὐθὺς ἄπειρος. διὸ καὶ κατὰ ταύτην ἐστὶν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἄπειρον τομή, τό τε εἶδος τῇ ὕλῃ συνδυαστὸν καὶ παντοπαθὲς διὰ ταύτην γενόμενον τῆς τοῦ ἓν εἶναι προσηγορίας ἀπήλλακται.

[29] In a letter to Xiphilinos, Psellos writes, "I don't seem to have ever understood myself, whether I am something divine or a beast more complicated than Typho." *Letter* 191 (Kurtz and Drexl) 217.28–29.

[30] ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι, ψυχὴ συνδεδεμένη τῷ σώματι· διὰ τοῦτο τοῖς νοήμασι χαίρω καὶ ταῖς αἰσθήσεσιν. εἰ δέ τις ἄνω τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχὴν ἔστησεν, εὐδαίμων οὗτός ἐστι καὶ μακάριος · ἐγὼ δέ, εἰ καὶ ἐξ ἡμισείας τῷ σώματι ζῷ, ἀγαπῴην ἄν. *Letter* 160 (Kurtz and Drexl) 187.12–16.

[31] οὔτε πάντῃ τῆς ὕλης ἀφίσταμαι οὔτε παντάπασιν αὐτῇ καταχώννυμαι · μερὶς γάρ εἰμι θεία, ἀλλὰ βιῷ μετὰ σώματος. Καὶ οὔτε μοι τὸ πάντῃ γεῶδες ἀρέσκει οὔτε πείθομαι τοῖς πτερύσσεσθαι εἰς τὸ ἐπέκεινα τῆς φύσεως ἀναγκάζουσι. μεταξὺ γοῦν τῶν ἀκροτήτων ἐφέστηκα ἢ πεπόρευμαι · καί μοι ἀρέσκει τὸ μηδὲν ἄγαν. ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ μέσος δυεῖν ἄκρων εἰμί, χείρονος καὶ βελτίονος, αὐτό τε ἀσπάζομαι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις πρεσβεύω. *Letter* 35 (Kurtz and Drexl) 57.20–27. This is of course reminiscent of Aristotle's "mean."

> not like to be completely earthbound nor am I am convinced by those who compel us to soar beyond nature. It has been my wont to stand or move between extremes. I like the proverb "Avoid extremes." It is my favorite and I prefer it to other maxims since I am the middle of two opposites, one lower, the other higher.

This general sensibility is extended to some interesting contexts, none more so than Psellos' curious friendship with the great ascetic, Elias. Thanks to George Dennis, who translated the ten letters related to Elias a few years ago, we can now easily assess their relationship.[32] It begins with a boat ride, where Psellos apparently meets Elias for the first time. Psellos reports that he was happy to see him on board since the mere presence of the "great ascetic" would ensure smooth sailing. Nevertheless, the monk creates an unexpected quandary for Psellos by entertaining his fellow passengers with tales from the brothels of Constantinople. It turns out the great ascetic knew the trade in great detail having maintained a list of names, locations and proclivities, information he gladly shared with the obviously appreciative oarsman. Psellos is vexed, wondering why God would give Jonah such a hard time and yet allow this lecherous monk such fine sailing. Elias quickly puts his mind at ease by assuring him that his licentiousness is all talk. Nevertheless, Psellos is still at a loss at the letter's end, thinking that even if he is telling the truth he would still be half evil; if he is lying, unlike the fate of Jonah, a whale would never spit him back out.

Regardless of the ambivalence of their first meeting, it's apparent from the other letters that Psellos and Elias became fast friends and enjoyed each other's company. Psellos often recommended him to others, praising his many talents as a story-teller, singer, actor and traveler. But Elias was also the object of Psellos' abstract consideration since he marveled at the curious conjunction of opposites within his personality. Although the chronology of the letters is unclear, the letter in manuscript that immediately follows the one describing their first meeting does seem to be Psellos' subsequent reflection on this encounter. What seems to have grown on Psellos is not a judgment of Elias' character, but rather an admiration. He acknowledges that Elias "knows only two residences, the brothel and the monastery." Nevertheless, he hopes that God might find a suitable place for him in the afterlife, a third place between heaven and hell:[33]

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[32] Dennis (2003) 43–62.
[33] Dennis (2003) 56.

> But if no such place exists, let him stand between paradise and the river of fire, scorched on one side, soothed on the other. Otherwise, the division could be on alternate days, on one day absolutely delightful but on the next all chains and scourging.

It is clear from the letters themselves that it was precisely this extreme oscillation of character that most interested Psellos. He goes so far as to admit that "I myself have often stood in admiration of the man and I swear by your holy soul that I have greatly loved him."[34] In fact, it seems Psellos came to identify his own character with that of his friend: in a letter found in Paris BN ms. 1182, after recounting at length how quickly and in what ways Elias is able to transform his sensibility, Psellos ends by saying:[35]

> Here is a riddle. I declare that he is the one who has written this letter. May this declaration now, in accord with Aristotle's dictum, be made public and not be made public. Just as Aeschylus, therefore, may this man compose a drama with many new elements and, in turn, you will find even more that is new.

But Psellos applied the form of the μίξις τῶν ἐναντιῶν to more than his analysis of character. The major themes of his thought are also stamped with two opposites and a middle. Take for instance the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy. Arguably the central theme of Psellos' pedagogical and political agenda, the balancing of this opposition also served as the primary criterion by which he evaluated the subjects of his encomia. Nevertheless, however radical his calls to balance the two disciplines may have appeared to his contemporaries, it would be difficult to argue that he was any more insistent than Dionysius of Halicarnassus had been in the 1st century BC.[36] Psellos was primarily calling for a return to Plato and Nazianzos as the models of literacy in opposition to the slavish and affected rhetoric of his contemporaries. But his understanding of the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric should not be dismissed as simply expressing the opposition of form and content.[37] First of all, in typically Aristotelian terms, Psellos associated philosophy as an ἐπιστήμη with the Mind's higher level of reality, and rhetoric as a τέχνη with the

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[34] Dennis (2003) 57.
[35] Dennis (2003) 51.
[36] For Dionysus' defense of a φιλόσοφος ῥητορική, see *Orat. Vett.* I:3.
[37] "Die Verschmelzung der Rhetorik mit der Philosophie scheint zunächst eine Verbindung von Form und Inhalt zu sein . . .," Hohti (1979) 27.

lower level of Matter.[38] As Anthony Kaldellis says, "Psellos' program is not the alliance of two equals."[39] Second, it is important to remember that Psellos posited the "political" as the middle between philosophy and rhetoric. Another letter makes this clear:[40]

> Perhaps then you understand philosophy and rhetoric, but you are still ignorant about the composite of both. My friend, both the rhetoric of philosophy and philosophical rhetoric exist, but there is another part that many call the political. Long ago this mixture existed as a kind of imperial priesthood, and happy was that time. Away with the Lysiai the Poloi and the Kallikles, for henceforth discourse was split in two, and both types flourished, the one concerning the Mind, the other, the tongue.

So while Psellos consistently maintains that philosophy is of a higher reality than rhetoric, he seemingly values their mixture, the political, as something more desirable than both. Psellos' convergence on the "political" therefore tends to flatten his conviction in the superiority of philosophy over rhetoric as if a regressing middle were drawing its opposites closer together. More often than not, Psellos seems to stress the complementarity of philosophy and rhetoric rather than the superiority of one over the other.[41]

In the case of mystical union, the general form of our diagram might again prove helpful. The conventional Neoplatonic interpretation, which we do in fact consistently see in Psellos, describes the spiritual ascent from Matter to the One by means of the mediation of Soul and Mind. Psellos often urges his students and correspondents to ascend to the pinnacle of Mind, from which God is finally seen in θεωρία. He describes this moment in his famous letter to Xiphilinos:[42]

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[38] *Orat. pan.* 17.222; *Phil. min.* I.49.15; *Theol.* I.19.26; *Letter* 188 (Sathas) 480.16–18.

[39] Kaldellis (1999) 130.

[40] σὺ μὲν οὖν ἴσως φιλοσοφίαν ἐπίστασαι καὶ ῥητορικήν, τὸ δ' ἐξ ἀμφοῖν σύνθετον ἀγνοεῖς· ἔστι δὲ ὦ λῷστε, καὶ φιλοσοφίας ῥητορική, καὶ ῥητορεία φιλόσοφος, θάτερον δὲ μέρος πολιτικόν φασιν οἱ πολλοί. καὶ πάλαι μὲν οὕτως ἔιχεν ἡ μίξις, ὥσπερ δὴ καὶ τὸ βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, καὶ ευδαίμονες οἱ τότε καιροί· ὄλοιντο δὲ Λυσίαι καὶ Πῶλοι καὶ Καλλικλεῖς· ἐκεῖθεν γὰρ διῳκίσθη τὰ γένη τῶν λόγων, καὶ τὸ μέν, περὶ νοῦν, τὸ δέ, περὶ γλῶτταν εὐδοκιμεῖ. *Letter* 174 (Sathas) 442.14–21.

[41] *Letter* 16 (Sathas) 256.13–14; *Letter* 188 (Sathas) 480.18–21; *Orat. pan.* 17.217; *Theol.* I.98.28.

[42] ἐκεῖσε γὰρ γεγονότες, ὁρῶμεν οὐχὶ νοοῦμεν, ἢ μᾶλλον οὐ νοοῦμεν ὅτι νοοῦμεν· κατάβασις γὰρ τοῦτο γνώσεως καὶ μερικῆς οὐσίας ἀντίληψις. ὁ γὰρ εἰδὼς ὅτι οἶδε δυσὶ μερίζεται γνώσεσιν, ὁ δὲ μερισμὸς ἀποστροφή τις ἐστὶ τοῦ κρείττονος καὶ ὑπόβασις. *Epist. ad Xiphil.* 55.

> When we arrive there we see, but we are not thinking, or rather, we are not thinking that we are thinking. For the latter is a descent of knowledge and an apprehension of particular being. He who knows that he knows is divided by two kinds of knowledge, and the division is a kind of turning away from the higher and a descent.

Nevertheless, Psellos gives no indication that he ever experienced such a moment of non-discursive vision. In fact, he admits that he never experienced such union and assumes that he is evidently unworthy of its blessing. His own fate seems to be an ever quickening oscillation between ascent and descent. He often describes philosophy as the increasing tension of the Mind that can only be relieved by falling back into the arms of rhetoric. In typical fashion, Psellos brings one of his theological lectures to a close by saying:[43]

> I know that when your minds concentrate on such abstract theory they tend to become dull in gazing upon its brilliance. Nevertheless, being philosophers and living according to the best theory of life, you need to stand upon this pinnacle of our nature. But since we must descend from there, may the charms of rhetoric take you in so that as you pass through this beautiful double course, you might sometimes rest in meadows and at others cross over to the summit of philosophy.

The dual necessity of ascent and descent, of tension and rest, is far more characteristic of Psellos' spiritual experience than mystical union. Again, in his letter to Xiphilinos, several paragraphs after attempting to describe what mystical union is in theory, Psellos ends his apology by once again defending the meadows of rhetoric:[44]

> I have become convinced that [rhetoric] is not an impediment to virtue, and in fact, may I rest in its descent, and from there more quickly ascend to higher concepts.

Moreover it could be argued that he rationalized his inability to achieve mystical union by once again converging on the middle. In

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[43] Καὶ οἶδα [μὲν] ὅτι τῇ πολλῇ ταύτῃ θεωρίᾳ ὁ ὑμέτερος καταθεὶς νοῦς ἀμβλύτερόν πως ταῖς ἐντεῦθεν ἐνατενίζει λάμψεσιν, ἀλλ' ὅμως χρή γε ὑμᾶς, φιλοσόφους ὄντας καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἀρίστην θεωρίαν τὴν τῆς ζωῆς ἔχοντας τελειότητα, ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐπαναβεβηκότος τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἵστασθαι. δεῆσαν δὲ καταβῆναι, αἱ ῥητορικαὶ ὑμᾶς ὑποδεχέσθωσαν χάριτες, ἵνα τὸν κάλλιστον τοῦτον διανύοντες δίαυλον πῇ μὲν ἐν λειμῶσι ἐπαναπαύησθε, πῇ δὲ τὴν φιλοσοφίας περιωπὴν διαβαίνοιτε. *Theol.* I.89.84–90.

[44] καὶ πέπεικα ἐμαυτόν, μή τοι πρὸς ἀρετὴν πεφυκέναι ταῦτα ἐμπόδια, καὶ σταίην ἄχρι ταύτης τῆς καταβάσεως, ἀφ' ἧς θᾶττον πρὸς τὰς ὑπερτέρας νοήσεις ἀφίσταμαι. *Epist. ad Xiphil.* 56.

one of his theological lectures, Psellos develops an idea that he admits is possibly dangerous in its innovation.[45] Commenting on Nazianzos' cryptic claim that "God is united to and recognized by gods," Psellos argues that this is possible because God descends to the point of our own ascension: the higher we rise, the lower God descends to meet us. He says:[46]

> For the divine descent occurs in proportion to the human ascent. If you barely ascend above the earth, in this measure you will recognize the descent of God . . . Thus the degree to which God acknowledges our recognition of him is the degree by which he is recognized by us.

What he seems to be saying is not that we rise to a pinnacle from which we passively see God, but that God meets us in the middle that joins our ascent to his descent, a meeting which both connects us to God and makes us gods as well.[47]

If Psellos' spiritual tendency brought him to a middle instead of ascending beyond, it might have been because it was in the middle that he also conceived the Emperor. Psellos clearly looked to the imperial throne to provide what he failed to receive from mysticism. This apparent obsequiousness has often colored judgments of his character, but the success of a court rhetorician was undoubtedly tied to his ability to glorify the connection between the Emperor and his heavenly prototype, a prototype who was himself the perfect and paradoxical mixture of two opposite natures. Psellos was of course remarkably successful in this capacity. In a letter to Constantine X Ducas, Psellos praises the Emperor for possessing an infinite height and depth, of magnanimity on the one hand, and of humility on the other. But what is even more remarkable about the Emperor is that he is the "mysterious combination" of both, whom Psellos specifically calls the "harmonious mixture of opposites."[48] He repeats this theme in a letter addressed to several *notarii*, urging them to

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[45] *Theol.* I.64.

[46] πρὸς γὰρ τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἄνοδον καὶ ἡ τοῦ θείου γίνεται κάθοδος. εἰ μὲν γὰρ πῆχυν ὑπὲρ γῆς ἀναβῇς, τοσούτῳ δὴ μέτρῳ καὶ θεὸν καταβαίνοντα ἔγνωκας . . . καὶ οὕτω δὴ κατὰ λόγον τῆς ἀναβάσεως ἡ τῆς τοῦ θείου γνώσεως κατάβασις γίνεται. καὶ ὅσον οὖν γινώσκει τοὺς γινωσκομένους θεός, τοσοῦτον αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖνος γνωρίζεται. *Theol.* I.64.141–147.

[47] Psellos' notion of God descending to meet our ascent fits well with our diagram that represents the descent of AA to AB and the return of BA to BB. See footnote 15.

[48] *Letter* 29 (Kurtz and Drexl) 42.15–16.

center their own interminable ascending and descending in the person of the Emperor.[49] But the most interesting suggestion that Psellos considered the Emperor not only in terms of a middle but as the seamless convergence of the middle itself is found in a letter to an unnamed friend at the court, to whom Psellos once again laments his separation from the Emperor:[50]

> But you possess the tree of life, our Emperor, while I have only Greek wisdom, that ambiguous plant which contains the middles of opposite states.

The contrast is clear: while Greek philosophy can only spin out an infinite regression of middles, the Emperor resolves this paradox in his own person.

There is only one problem with this conviction: Psellos himself. The independent and fixed significance of the Emperor is undermined by his own insistence that only a great encomiast can make that significance real.[51] Psellos tells Constantine Monomachos that "I came into world for books and am in constant conversation with them that I might acquire sufficient power for your praises."[52] And an Emperor worthy of such praises is one who can embrace and be guided by the same philosophical rhetoric that a great encomiast uses to glorify him.[53] The Emperor needs Psellos just as much as Psellos needs the Emperor. In a letter to Caesar John Doukas, Psellos concedes the philosophical superiority of Plato and Aristotle but suggests that their royal pupils, Dionysius and Alexander, rejected philosophy because their great teachers made no attempt to compose encomia in their honor. In this respect Psellos claims to be their better:[54]

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[49] *Letter* 70 (Sathas) 306.10–14.

[50] ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς μὲν καὶ τὸ ξύλον ἔχετε τῆς ζωῆς, φημὶ δὲ τὸν βασιλέα ἡμῶν, ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν σοφίαν, τὸ ἀμφίβολον φυτὸν καὶ μέσας ἔχον τῶν ἐναντίων ἕξεων. *Letter* 261 (Kurtz and Drexl) 307.18–21.

[51] Psellos repeatedly attempted to convince the Patriarch Michael Keroularious of this connection as well. See especially *Letter* 16 (Maltese) 58–59: "Just as it is my great fortune to have met your gracious soul, so too is it yours that my auspicious tongue has taken up the praises of your achievements."

[52] *Letter* 115 (Sathas) 361.7–8.

[53] See especially this exhortation to Monomachos: *Orat. pan.* 3.41–84.

[54] εἰς ἄκρον μὲν φιλοσοφίας ἐληλάκεισαν ἄμφω, λόγων δὲ χάριτας οὐκ ἐσχήκασι· διὰ ταῦτα ἐλάττους ἐν τοῖς ἐγκωμίοις γεγόνασιν. ἐγὼ δὲ σοι ἥττων μὲν τὴν σοφίαν ἐκείνων, κρείττων δὲ τὴν γλῶτταν περὶ τὴν εὐφημίαν εἰμί. *Letter* 231 (Kurtz and Drexl) 278.13–17.

> They both reached the pinnacle of philosophy, but they failed to practice the charms of language. Therefore, they became inferior in composing encomia. But I, inferior to their wisdom, am superior to them in singing praise.

Our reflection on these general themes therefore suggests that Psellos stamped each one with the form of a conceptual precision based on a middle. Nevertheless, his attempt to maintain the elements of that middle in vertical relation is undermined by the infinite regression implied in the "matter" of any convergent series, a tension that tends to flatten the hierarchical relationship of the opposites. This is why Psellos' own self-definition is both clearly articulated but fundamentally ambiguous, why his understanding of the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric posits the superiority of philosophy yet tends to stress their complimentarity, why his explanation of mystical union is more convincing as a convergence than as an ascent, and why the Emperor is conceptualized as a middle but undermined by the regression represented by his encomiast, Psellos himself.

It is perhaps easy to snicker at the grandiose generalization of George Ostrogorski's conclusion to his *History of the Byzantine State*, where he claims that "Byzantium had preserved the heritage of the ancient world and in so doing had fulfilled its mission in world history."[55] Nevertheless, it remains the case that Byzantium produced no Aeschylus, no Thucydides, no Aristotle and most certainly no Plato. However, it did produce Michael Psellos, who perhaps more than any other Byzantine thinker makes Ostrogorski's claim comprehensible if not profoundly accurate. There is more to the transmission of the ancient legacy than the collection of manuscripts and the digesting of philosophical maxims. There is also the living witness of an individual sensibility. What I have suggested about Michael Psellos in this regard speaks well of him. For I would say that his conceptual precision and the sensibility it represents, taken as it was from Proclus, can be traced further back to Plato's *Parmenides*. In this dialog, Plato exposes the heart of philosophy by contrasting two views of reality, his own and that of Parmenides. For Parmenides reality is one, for Plato it is two. Plato knows that for opinion and discourse to exist things must be both "in themselves" and "in relation

[55] Ostrogorski (1969) 572.

to something," but the Principle of Noncontradiction has to be qualified in order to allow this.[56] Nevertheless, positing this qualification does little to solve the apparent paradox of saying A is never not-A except when it is. Proclus describes it this way, the very first proposition of his *Elements of Theology*: Every plurality somehow participates unity. Because that "somehow" qualifies the middle of participation indefinitely, we call it a paradox or an infinite regression.

[56] Scolnikov (2003) 21–2, 166.

THE WRITING OF DREAMS: A NOTE ON PSELLOS' FUNERAL ORATION FOR HIS MOTHER

Christine Angelidi

In discussing Kekaumenos' *Strategikon* and the works of Symeon the New Theologian, Alexander Kazhdan remarked that the texts reflect the growing prominence of the family over the community, and an individual approach to God. He concluded by arguing that in the eleventh century individualism acquired a new cultural value and became an important feature of social behavior.[1] The *œuvre* of Psellos shows that by that time a further step toward literary subjectivity and self-consciousness was becoming possible, for Psellos considered that re-constructing, re-organizing and re-shaping the authorial self should be an essential component of a rhetor/philosopher's attitude.[2] Moreover he clearly manifested a new, individualized attitude in the account he gave of others: the narrative of his personal perception of individual people replaced the traditional "objective" description. As such, Psellos introduced an aspect of self-awareness that made autobiographical discourse possible.[3]

"Autobiographical" discourse is a significant trend in Psellos' literary production and it is given a prominent position in the *Funeral Oration for his Mother*. The text, entitled "Autobiography" in its latest edition,[4] focuses on the emotional response of Psellos to events and attitudes that affected the family's everyday life and contributed to the formation of his self. The unfolding of the discourse presents the mother, Theodote, as the main character. Nevertheless, the biographical narrative is selective and organized in such a way as to capture episodes of her life that were related to members of her family: parents, husband, daughter, and especially her son. The intense

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[1] Kazhdan (1967) esp. 25; Kazhdan (1985) 99–101, and 197, 220–30.

[2] Papaioannou (2004); Papaioannou (in this volume).

[3] Angold (1998) 233, 234. The autobiographical character of the *Chronography* was first explored by Misch (1962) 760, who labeled it "Fragmente einer Autobiographie".

[4] *Enc. in mat.*, ed. Criscuolo (1989). The definition was rejected by Sideras (1994) 130 with n. 131, but see the argumentation of Hinterberger (1999) 41–3.

emotional bond, which connected Psellos with his mother, permeates the entire text. Yet the author describes vividly his tender attachment to his father and sister and the acute distress he felt at their death. In fact, Psellos transforms a narrative dedicated to the praise of his deceased mother into a textual recollection of loving remembrances, turning the grief he experienced into recorded memories.[5]

The *Funeral Oration for his Mother* is distinct from the repertoire of Late Antique, Christian and non-Christian, writing for the dead. In this regard, it is notable that Psellos' stylistic model—the Funeral Orations of Gregory of Nazianzos[6]—only introduces Nonna as a secondary character. The concern for the family found in Psellos's text betrays links to a theme that emerged in the literature produced during the iconoclastic era. The emotional relationship of a mother and her saintly children or among the siblings themselves is a new motif that hagiographers of the ninth- and tenth-centuries introduced into their works.[7]

One of the strongest expressions of the bond between mother and son is found in a rhetorical text from this era. In 797–798, while in exile, Theodore of Stoudios was informed of his mother's illness. Like Psellos, he could not be present at her deathbed, but he wrote a funeral sermon that he delivered himself probably in the monastery of Sakkoudion.[8] This sermon has several points in common with Psellos' later work. Like Psellos, Theodore describes the spiritual qualities of his mother—piety, modesty and the austere upbringing of her children[9]—as well as her human virtues, such as compassion for the indigent and love for the members of her family. Like Theodote, Theoktiste was particularly attached to Theodore, whom she supported and guarded during the happy and sad times of his life. It is apparent that Psellos found Theodore's sermon to be a rich source for his portrayal of his mother and the description of their relationship.

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[5] On Psellos' expression of grief, see Angold (1998) 234. On the psychological importance of the grief work, see Freud (1917, rep. 1957).

[6] For a detailed discussion on Psellos' *imitatio* of Gregory, see Milovanovic (1984); cf. *Enc. in mat.* 38–39, 41.

[7] See e.g., Kazhdan (1999) 201–02, and particularly the late tenth-century *Vita* of Nikephoros of Miletos.

[8] Theodore of Stoudios, *Laudatio funebris* 883–902. For an assessment of the text, see Kazhdan (1999) 244–46.

[9] Theodore of Stoudios, *Laudatio funebris* 884C–885B, 888A, to compare with *Enc. in mat.* 101.456–468; cf. also Theodore of Stoudios, *Laudatio funebris* 885B, and *Enc. in mat.* 105.590–106.601, for a similar story with the inversion of personages.

One of the notable features of Psellos' *Funeral Oration for his Mother* is the selection of dream experiences, probably chosen from a series of similar narratives.[10] Dream-narratives are not to be found in the literary models for the discourse, and there is no other such account in the rest of Psellos' work.[11] Yet, dream theory and dreaming narrative were extensively discussed in the Neoplatonic and especially the late Neoplatonic circles in which Psellos found a paragon of style and philosophical thought.

Religious and secular dreams as well as dream-interpretation are found in tenth-century historiography, hagiography and epistolography.[12] By the eleventh century, anyone wishing to perform divination or to simply interpret a significant dream could consult a number of specialized Byzantine handbooks,[13] and the manuscript tradition of Late-Antique treatises bears witness to the fact that the subject was of some importance to the scholars of that day.[14] Psellos tackles briefly the question of dreaming when he comments on Platonic and Aristotelian notions that refer to the attributes of the body and soul; the same topic is developed in two more texts.[15] In these texts he sets forth his own theoretical framework and categorization of dreams, one that is heavily dependent on ancient sources. He distinguishes two main categories, non-predictive and predictive dreams that correspond to dreams originating respectively either from a reaction of the intellect to the senses or from the soul alone. The predictive category is further sub-divided into three groups: dreams that involve

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[10] The dreams have recently been analyzed by Walker (2004) 77–8, 86–7, 91–3, in a study that focuses on Psellos' aesthetics, combined with an overview of Psellos' life and attitude towards philosophy and rhetoric. Like Criscuolo, Walker considers that the dream narratives are invented. This position sets, to my view, the issue of Byzantine oneirology in a wrong direction.

[11] A single, probably fake, dream is mentioned in the *Chron.* 6.142–43.

[12] Theophanes Continuatus, *Theoph. Cont.* 222.2–9, 222.9–23, 223.9–22, 225.15–226.3, 43.20–439.17; Theodore Daphnopates, *Correspondance* nos. 15 and 17. On these dreams see the discussion in Calofonos (1994) 114–16, and Odorico (1995) 301–12.

[13] Such as the *Oneirocritica* of Daniel, Achmet and Nicephoros. On their form, content and manuscript tradition, see Calofonos (1994) 6–14. A dreambook is registered among the books that the emperor took with him in campaign (*Three Treatises*, 106, 211); a dreambook was bequeathed by Boïlas to the monastery he founded [Lemerle (1977) 24–5], but Kekaumenos warns his son not to believe in dreams [*Strategikon* (ed. Litavrin) 61].

[14] The cod. Laurentianus plut. 87,8, of the eleventh century is the earliest and best manuscript of Artemidoros' *Oneirocriticon*.

[15] *Phil. min.* I.38 (Περὶ ὀνείρων) and *Omni. doc.* 116 (Πῶς ὄνειροι γίνονται).

the soul alone, those originating from the soul and the intellect and those that appear in the soul inspired by God.[16] Translated into the conventional vocabulary of oneirology these definitions correspond to the three types of significant dreams: the *oneiros*, the *chrematismos* and the *horama*.

The two dreamers in the text—Theodote and Psellos, the mother and the son—have one double and three independent dreams.[17] These refer to Psellos' intellectual and spiritual growth and, additionally, stress the loving bond between parents and son.

Psellos was eight years old when his mother had the first dream mentioned in the *Oration*. At that time, he had completed his elementary studies and now aspired to continue his education. A gathering of friends and family was convened to discuss the issue and Theodote was the only one to support her son's wish. However, she was still undecided when she fell asleep that night. Then she dreamt of someone, a holy man whom she recognized because he looked like John Chrysostom. This heavenly apparition talked to her and promised to personally take care of the education of her son.[18] Theodote only informed her son of this vision later; she kept secret a second dream on the same issue, which was narrated to Psellos by his aunt after Theodote's death. It was this second dream that strengthened Theodote's decision to support the young Psellos and that eventually led to his gaining the support of the family. This time she dreamt that she entered the church of the Holy Apostles accompanied by two unknown persons. As she approached the bema the Virgin appeared and addressed Theodote's companions. She said to them: "Fill him with literature; you know that he worships me". Theodote, continues Psellos, had also described to her sister the traits of her companions. The first had a large round head, a short nose, white sparse hair and a short beard. The second was much shorter with white hair, and a long beard.[19] Although provoked by motherly

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[16] For a discussion of Psellos' classification, see Calofonos (1994) 123–5 and 163.

[17] I do not take into account the vision of the old nun recorded in the *Funeral Oration* [*Enc. in mat.* 134.1400–135.1418], which presents the glorious afterlife of Theodote in heaven. The passage reproduces a literary *topos* widely used in mid-Byzantine hagiography.

[18] *Enc. in mat.* 95.293–96.316.

[19] *Enc. in mat.* 96.317–97.336. To my view there is no reason for distinguishing the followers of Theodote from the holy persons the Virgin addresses, as suggested in Criscuolo's Italian translation: *Enc. in mat.* 168.

concern and the worries of the day, which would normally signify a non-predictive *enypnion*, Theodote's double dream, involving the apparitions of heavenly beings who advise the dreamer, can easily be classified in the *chrematismos* group. The narrative underlines Theodote's possession of two spiritual qualities: piety and modesty. The latter is implicit in her reluctance to speak of a dream in which she has had a vision of the Virgin, an appearance rarely granted to the faithful.[20] Two further details confer a hagiographic character upon this narrative. The vision of a holy person that predicts to the dreaming mother the future of the child is a *topos* employed in both post-Iconoclastic hagiography and in historiography of the tenth and eleventh centuries. In both forms the *topos* indicates that divine grace has been conferred upon a future leader or saint.[21] The infiltration of hagiography into the narrative is even more apparent in the deployment of a second *topos*: recognition of the holy persons by means of their visible traits.[22] In order to identify the saints that appeared in Theodote's dreams Psellos invites his audience to decode their physical features. When designating the Virgin he chose a somewhat ambiguous phrasing: "a woman that rarely appears in visions"[23] in order to underscore the rarity of the vision granted to Theodote. In contrast, John Chrysostom was readily identifiable for Theodote, as he resembled the Golden Tongue, the Christian Antiochene; the phrasing certainly alludes to the iconography of the saint.[24] When, however, Psellos describes the holy persons that accompanied Theodote in the second dream, he abandons rhetorical *periphrasis*. Instead, he provides a description that is reminiscent of the *eikonismos*, the technical description that focuses on the particular and aims to individualize the represented holy person. It is difficult to interpret this change of

[20] On the interpretation of the passage, see below n. 23.

[21] See e.g. the *Vita* of Alypios the Stylite 148.22–27; cf. also the *Vitae* of Lazaros of Galesios par. 2, 509 (where the dream is replaced by the vision of the divine light), and of Stephen the Younger 92.25–93.7 (where the dream results to the conception of the saint). The dream of Basil's I mother in *Theoph. Cont.* 222.9–23, was probably invented to serve as dynastic propaganda: Calofonos (1994) 115.

[22] Dagron (1979) 144–49; Dagron (1991) 30.

[23] The adjective τῶν δυσθεάτων clearly refers to the noun θέα, employed in patristic writings to designate the vision of God or holy persons, not to "indistinct features" as interpreted by Walker (2004) 77–8, which forms his main argument for identifying the heavenly appearance with the personification of "Lady Rhetoric" or "Lady Philosophy".

[24] Συνήθης ἐκεινη is the expression of Psellos, which I take to allude to Theodote's familiarization with depictions of the saint.

style, which seems to reflect Psellos' confusion with reference to the identification of the saints. Since the scene is set in the church of the Holy Apostles, Criscuolo suggests that the Virgin addressed the leading Apostles, Peter and Paul, and in fact the description conforms to their *eikonismos* as recorded by Elpios.[25] Still, neither Peter nor Paul were ever praised as patrons of letters. By the first half of the eleventh century, however, another cult of saintly patrons of letters, education and scholarship was introduced by Psellos' mentor John Mauropous and was progressively institutionalized.[26] The holy group of the Three Hierarchs, comprised John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzos and Basil of Caesarea, and it is worth noting that the relics of Chrysostom and Gregory had been deposited in the church of the Holy Apostles since the tenth century.[27] Chrysostom and Basil are also expressly cited in the dreams recorded in the *Oration*. While there is no secure ground for identifying the two saints in the dream, it is nevertheless tempting to assume that Psellos wished to associate this vision with the Three Hierarchs even though he was aware of the disparity between the description and their depiction.

The next dream episode is set a few years later. At the age of ten, when Psellos was studying grammar and Homer, he already displayed a precocious ability for the appreciation of rhetorical figures and style. This development is reflected in the following dream:

> "I was very young when I had a strange dream about hunting two birds of the musical kind, a parrot and a magpie. I caught them and placed them in my bosom, caressing and playing with their feathers. Suddenly, they spoke like human beings and said: 'Do not make us suffer, but treat us like a master.[28] Let us free and discuss with us to convince us that you are worthy to be our master'. So I let them go," he continues, "and began to talk. After a long time they said: 'It is enough, we reckon that you won'. At the time," he concludes, "I was

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[25] Criscuolo (*Enc. in mat.* 246), followed by Walker (2004) 77. Neither makes mention of Elpios, whose text would support the identification they propose. For Elpios' εἰκονισμός of Peter and Paul, see Chatzidakis (1938) 411–13.

[26] For the contribution of John Mauropous to the development of the cult and the earliest iconographic examples, see Walter (1982) 111–15; for the theological, ecclesiastical and political background of the cult, see Gazi (2004) 180–91, 194–231. The feast of the Three Hierarchs was instituted by Alexios I Komnenos.

[27] Janin (1969) 50.

[28] On the parrot and the magpie imitating the human voice, cf. Psellos, *Phil. min.* II.13.57.12–13, commenting on Philoponos.

> still immature and thought that the dream was a mere fantasy provoked by the irrational part of my soul. Only later, when I learned and mastered music and science I grasped the true significance of my dream.[29]

Psellos held that the dreams of children were usually provoked by the senses.[30] Therefore, he rightly began by considering the dream to be unimportant and cast it in the non-predictive group. He did not even attempt to interpret it at the time. Instead he preferred to review the dream much later, when at the age of twenty-five, and having already mastered the art of rhetoric, he began the study of science and art.[31] It was only once the dream started becoming true that he acknowledged its predictive meaning, and he thus considered it an *oneiros*. Nonetheless, Psellos' mature interpretation does not essentially depart from a conventional reading of the dream.

This reading appears to draw on strands and methods available in existing dream and other literature. For example, the pairing of a parrot and a magpie figures in a fragment of Chrysippos, where it provides an example of the group of birds that successfully imitate the human voice. Several Late-Antique authors repeat this example and in the *Souda* lexicon it supplements the respective entries for the parrot and the magpie.[32] That this dream imagery was based on a literary source should not, therefore, be excluded. This possibility can be given greater weight by such phenomena as the bird oneiromancy that was performed in Neoplatonic circles and by the qualification of birds as μουσικά, a term that Plato employs for the designation of persons dedicated to the Muses, men of letters, and scholars. Oneirocritic literature presents the pair separately: the parrot symbolizes the man of taste, whereas the magpie stands as a metaphor for impostors as well as for ingenious men,[33] the latter being the quality *par excellence* of Odysseus in Byzantine literature. In addition, the theme of hunting is not conferred an especially auspicious meaning in oneiromancy. Although considered a noble activity

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[29] *Enc. in mat.* 98.
[30] *Phil. min.* II.13.65.19 with 65.30.
[31] *Chron.* 6.36–39.
[32] *Suid.* letter Kappa 1683 and letter Psi 115. For the citations see *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.
[33] Artemidoros 234.19–20, and 23–24.

in Byzantium,[34] it reflects the anxiety of the dreamer, who seeks something lost or desirable.[35]

It is clear that despite his expressed objections, Psellos applied the traditional method that would be used by any dream-interpreter in the explanation of his dream. He first decoded the elements of the dream and then chose the meaning he thought would better fit the background and aspirations of the dreamer.[36] It is the combination of details that gave the childhood experience a prophetic sense whose coherence was confirmed when the dream was realized.

When Psellos was in his late teens and was working as the assistant of a provincial *krites*, his sister died while giving birth to a healthy child; it was the first loss for Psellos' immediate family. A short time afterwards, Theodote became a nun and her husband became a monk. Psellos was fond of his father and he tenderly remembers his mild character and his physical appearance, which he compares to a cypress. Once he visited him in his place of retreat and they had a long discussion, during which Psellos tried to appease his father's troubled soul. His father died that same night. Psellos and his mother were present at his deathbed and shared an intense moment of grief. The son's mourning before his father's corpse was intensified by his mother's words. She bitterly accused him of having abandoned Christian piety for the sake of secular learning. Confused by her words and anxious about the destiny of his father's soul in the afterlife, Psellos prayed at length to God to grant him a last encounter with his father. Furthermore, he endeavored again and again to attract the soul of the deceased:

> "Then I tried in vain to sleep", he narrates. "Suddenly I felt that my eyes were wide open and I saw my father clad in the monastic garment he was buried with. He was radiant; the eyes as bright as torches, and I could barely support his vision with my senses and intellect. He approached in a human way, touched me and let me touch him. Then

[34] On the imperial imagery of hunting, see Patlagean (1992). The scenery and plot denote a "male" dream; they reflect a "rite of passage" experience, as discussed by Patlagean (1986) 269, for a later period.

[35] Cf. Artemidoros 98.19–21.

[36] Artemidoros 15.5–13, and 251.22–252.20. This *longue durée* method of dream-interpretation was given a scientific status and applied by Freud for therapeutic purposes: see Price (1986). On Artemidoros' criteria for deciphering dreams, see Foucault (1984) 26–29.

> he said that he was granted to die and to behold God, and that he was interceding to Him on my behalf."[37]

The experience is defined as ὄψις, a term employed in hagiography to designate the vision of a holy person advising, comforting or transmitting God's will to the faithful. Psellos' account is very close to the expectations for hagiographic vision, which is prepared beforehand by prayer, and occurs when the senses of the beholder are in repose but the soul is awake and conscious. The vision culminates with the apparition of a saintly person who transmits a divine message. Structurally, the dream could easily be deemed an example of *horama*, which would imply the sanctification of Psellos' father.

Divine dreams that occur in the state between sleep and wakefulness stand in the highest level of the classification discussed by Iamblichus.[38] Furthermore in the introductory part of the dream, Psellos explicitly states that besides praying he proceeded to an occult performance: "I tried hard", he says, "to drag the soul of my father here, I almost forced it to reveal to me where it had gone" (τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ψυχὴν πρὸς τοῦτο ἐφελκυσάμενος, καὶ αὖθις ὡσανεὶ καταναγκάσας δεῖξαι ὅπῃ κεχώρηκεν).[39] He is not very explicit about the technique he used, which most probably was a Christianized version of the Neoplatonic adaptation of the Chaldaean science. Vocabulary and details convey the impression that a certain ambiguity with regard to the real origin of the vision is intentional. The dance-like movement of the apparition can be found in Neoplatonic as well as Christian sources.[40] The descending, flowing and luminous form under which the father's soul appears to Psellos clearly reminds us of Iamblichus' description of the genuine approach of the spirit.[41] The use of the same source or, better, a mediumistic technique modeled on the theurgist experiences can be deduced from the reference to the physical contact between Psellos and the father's soul.[42]

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[37] *Enc. in mat.* 129.1254–1275.

[38] Iamblichus, *Myst.* 3.2. For a discussion of Iamblichus' dream theory, see Calofonos (1994) 63–65.

[39] *Enc. in mat.* 129.1257–1258.

[40] *Enc. in mat.* 284. Iamblichus, *Myst.* III.13, warns against the false visions, which involve inadequate techniques or an impure medium. The description of such a false invocation of spirits is comprised in Psellos' pamphlet against the patriarch Michael Keroularios: *Orat. for.* 1.115–130, 148–174.

[41] Iamblichus, *Myst.* III.6.

[42] Cf. Iamblichus, *Myst.* III.5. On the techniques of theurgy and Psellos' approach to occultism, see Dodds (1959) Appendix II, 283–314.

Psellos was thus torn between the philosophy of salvation and the philosophy of secular knowledge, between religious and scientific, occult practices, but he was also torn between the moral obligation to respond to the expectations of his parents and his personal need for worldly activity. In concluding the dream narrative, he not only expresses his deep remorse at his failure to accomplish his father's wishes, but also explains that no one should be forced to choose between good and evil. The path we follow in life, he concludes, is determined by free will and personal predisposition.[43]

Psellos had disappointed his father while alive, and he was not completely reconciled with his mother, who nonetheless never ceased to express her love for him and her hope that he would eventually find his way to a godly life.[44] After her death Psellos had the following dream:

> One night I saw I was led to the holy fathers by two hierophants clad in white. At first the road was broad but then became too narrow for the three of us to proceed together. Moreover the way was blocked at the end by a thin, ochre-colored wall made out of polished stone. There was a hole in the middle of it, not exactly circular and surrounded by spears. My companions told me to go through the hole and suggested that I enter first my head and then slip in my body. I did as I was told and the stone was ceding and somehow dissolving. On the other side I bravely came down a long staircase and found myself in a chapel. On the left I saw the icon of the Virgin and my mother standing before it. I run to embrace her, but she stopped me. Then she showed me on the right side of the chapel a monk kneeling; his eyes fixed on a tablet. He was tall and gloomy. My mother said that he was saint Basil and urged me to pay him my respects. As I approached he looked up and nodded, but then disappeared in a rumble of thunder and my mother was also nowhere to be seen. And then I was in another place and my companions were whispering to me words I could not grasp as I was asleep.[45]

Psellos would probably consider his dream as a *chrematismos*, with a strong taint of morality. It signified that his mother continued to be concerned about him in the afterlife.[46] It also signified that because he discarded the first sign of God's will when he was allowed to

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[43] *Enc. in mat.* 129.1276–130.1293, esp. lines 1282–1286.
[44] *Enc. in mat.* 136.1455–56.
[45] *Enc. in mat.* 142.1638–144.1685.
[46] *Enc. in mat.* 144.1685–87.

contemplate his father's soul, the worldly life he pursued was disapproved in heaven. However, Psellos does not directly comment on his dream, which is characterized by exceptionally rich and detailed imagery as it builds its narrative.

By presenting two holy persons that lead the dreamer through a long, narrow path, the introductory section sets the dream within the framework of a conventional middle Byzantine vision.[47] Usually one or two angels or saints announce a God-sent vision. They are meant first to help the dreamer to proceed from earthly life to the other world and then to guide him in the ascent from the place of the Sinner to the dwellings of the Just. In this instance, the holy persons helped Psellos until he reached the wall and then instructed him as to how he might advance. Then they disappeared and left him alone to confront the experience below. From that point on, the dream departs from the norms of Byzantine narratives of the otherworld.

In an exceptionally precise oneiric language Psellos describes the almost circular opening of the wall, the spears hanging around it and the gradual transformation of the pale-colored stone into a soft material. Combined with the descending ladder,[48] the image conveys the impression that the dreamer enters through a mouth into the living body.[49] The scene clearly reproduces the emblematic moment of Jonah's story, in which he is swallowed by the whale (an established typological image for Christ's burial, descent into Hades and resurrection),[50] and it is a key to understanding the content of Psellos' dream. The Old Testament Book of Jonah relates the peregrination of the prophet, who reluctant to fulfil God's will, tried to escape

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[47] For other examples, see *Theoph.Cont.* 438–39; *Enc. in mat.*, 134.1414; Angelidi (1983), 84, 94 and n. 12.

[48] Cf. Aristides, *Hieron Logon* G.48 (= 424.28–30).

[49] In Freudian interpretation of the dream, Del Medico (1932) 226, n. 1, considers that the image stands as a metaphor for Psellos' inhibited sexual impulse for his mother. For a critique of Del Medico's Freudian approach to Psellos, see Papaioannou (2000) 144–45.

[50] *Theol.* I.45.35: τύπος τοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ταφέντος καὶ ἀναστάντος Χριστοῦ ὁ Ἰωνᾶς γέγονεν (after Mt. 12.40). For a psychological approach to Jonah's story, see Fromm (1957) 11–23 and Fromm (1990) 119–33. Walker (2004) 92–3, understands the image as a metaphor for the entrance into the womb; he further suggests that the underground chapel "resonates the church and monastery of Ta Narsou", or the "famous shrine of Zoodochos Pege" (that is the Virgin of Pege). To my view, any attempt of identification forces on the text.

him, and undertook a sea journey during which a storm threatened the ship. While the sailors were desperately trying to save it, Jonah retreated into the hold and fell asleep, but the lot fell on him and so he was thrown into the sea. Swallowed by a whale he remained in the beast's belly for three nights and three days, during which he prayed, confessing the weakness and confusion of his soul. Then, God forgave him and the whale vomited Jonah out upon the seashore. Finally, Jonah is seen as fulfilling the divine order and the narrative concludes with his long prayer, which focuses on repentance and on God's mercy.

Psellos' dream narrates the same story albeit with a different structure. Contrary to Jonah he had first to enter the secret place of his inner self and then to confront his ghosts: his mother's wishes and the reproof of his behavior by the heavenly appearance.[51] Like Jonah, the journey into the depths of his soul signifies the acquisition of consciousness and the promise that an alternative way of life is possible. Finally, instead of a prayer to God, Psellos addresses a confession to his mother.

The dream-of-the-mother is in many ways the counterpart of the vision of the father. They both represent parental authority, but essentially differ in imagery and response. The brightness and tenderness that emanate from the apparition of the father's soul are contrasted to the gloominess and anxiety he sensed during the "dream-of-the-mother". Psellos reacted with a short, emotional response to the vision of the father. In concluding the narrative of the "dream-of-the-mother" experience—the passage stands also as an epilogue to the *Oration*—he provides a full account of the knowledge he has accumulated and draws attention to the important career that acquired wisdom has enabled him to achieve.[52] He probably intended to remind his mother of her support to the precocious manifestations of his scholarship;[53] he certainly reiterates his firm belief in self-determination.[54] No expression of remorse or affection pervades this long declaration of fulfilled aspirations, of weaknesses and turmoil.

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[51] In the discussion of archetypes, Jung introduced the basement as a metaphor for subconscious or unconscious; cf. the narrative of the "phallus in the basement" dream and its death connotations in Jung (1961, rep. 1989) 11–13.

[52] *Enc. in mat.* 144.1692–152.1918.

[53] Cf. the dream narratives discussed above p. 156, and *Enc. in mat.* 105.590–598.

[54] *Enc. in mat.* 153.1930–31.

In the last paragraph Psellos adopts a milder tone and expresses his hope that a life in God was still possible for him, since his mother offered him a major example of the way to salvation while alive and would protect him for ever in heaven through her prayers.[55] Yet, the shift could be attributed to an attempt to conform to the rules of the genre that require a last address of praise to the deceased,[56] and the theme of the discourse—a *Funeral Oration for his Mother*—could explain the exhaustive response of the son to his mother's aspirations.

The defense of knowledge has led to this text being dated to 1054–1055. At that time Psellos was in disgrace and was subsequently forced to abandon his secular career in Constantinople for the monastic life on Bithynian Olympos. While the date of Theodote's death remains unclear, it is apparent that Psellos used the occasion of her death to frame his broader discourse on his own formation in and through his family.[57] He thus combines praise of a virtuous mother with an outspoken expression of conflicting feelings towards both his father and his mother. Instead of a formal discourse, Psellos has composed an autobiographical text that is also the confession of a complex and loving bond that connected him to his parents. They both wished the best for him, sharing in the same expectations. Nonetheless it is clear that he suffered because of his mother's coercion. The dream she had when Psellos was eight years old already implied that she connected her son's education with an ecclesiastical career, but at the time he was too young and too eager to continue his studies to grasp the significance of his mother's aspirations. The dream that he had when he was ten years old clearly indicated his predisposition and complied perfectly with the image of the knowledgeable person he wished to become. Then, the sister's death and the subsequent retreat into monasticism by his parents marked the end of his family life and the beginning of the formation of Psellos' autonomous identity.[58] The two last dreams of the *Oration* and the

[55] *Enc. in mat.* 152.1919–153.1939.

[56] Ps. Menander, II.IX.170–78.

[57] *Enc. in mat.* 21–7, and Sideras (1994) 131–32. Walker (2004) 65–6, suggests the period between 1059 and 1064, when Psellos in disgrace again was living in the monastery of Ta Narsou.

[58] Embracing monasticism is often thought to represent a first death. For the loss of the parents as the critical step towards psychological emancipation, see Freud

response to them deal with an inner conflict that Psellos resolves by wholly accepting the individual's responsibility in determining one's choices and actions in life.

By introducing the dream narratives into the *Oration*, Psellos seems to perceive the dream experience as the space of confluence of hidden desires and expressed wishes. Dream narratives enabled him to deal with his grief and also to explain his reaction to parental authority. We do not know whether the *Oration* was intended for public delivery or for what, if any, audience it might have been composed. Whatever the case, Psellos provides, by Byzantine standards, unique testimony of the formation of an individual's self-identity.[59]

(1917, rep. 1957); cf. however above n. 44, and Shapiro (1956), for the methodological problems in applying Freudian techniques when analyzing historical cases.

[59] I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues Niki Tsironi, Ilias Anagnostakis and George Calofonos for their useful suggestions at various stages of the composition of this paper.

ATTALEIATES AS A READER OF PSELLOS

Dimitri Krallis

Did Michael Attaleiates read Michael Psellos' historical work and are there traces of such a reading in his own text? The purpose of this paper is to follow those traces and discuss the interaction between the *Chronographia* and the *Historia* as evidence of a broader political and cultural debate that did not simply take place in the pages of books but characterized court life and defined relationships among intellectuals.[1] Those texts are the chatter, dialogue, and squabble of the Byzantine corridors of power, inscribed on parchment and paper. They ceremonially encode in different narrative forms behaviors and ideas that belong to the realm of a political and cultural debate that took place within the confines of the imperial *taxis*. The parallel study of Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates will expose their respective positions in this political debate. In this paper I will argue that in reading the *Chronographia*, Attaleiates actively engaged with Psellos' text and used it to articulate his own positions. The *Historia* must, therefore, be conceived in contradistinction to Psellos' *Chronographia*. Yet, despite the primacy ascribed to the latter text by such a position, it will also be possible to argue that the *Chronographia* itself contains responses to arguments that had gained currency at court as a result of private conversation, the circulation of pamphlets, or even early versions of some parts of Attaleiates' historical writings.

Before we focus our attention on the texts, a few words are in order on the writer of the *Historia*, the *proedros*, judge of the hippodrome and the *velum* Michael Attaleiates. His was a typical self-made Byzantine's career, which took him from the status of snubbed stranger to that of a member of the *aristokratikoi*.[2] Born to "orthodox parents" in Attaleia on the southern coast of Asia Minor in the early 1020s,

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[1] This paper is part of a broader attempt to read the work of Attaleiates undertaken as part of my Doctoral thesis at the University of Michigan.

[2] Attaleiates, *Diataxis*, 19 [f.2 26–28] on Attaleiates' own self-presentation in his monastic charter.

he left in his teens for the "Queen of Cities" to pursue a higher education.[3] He begins his account of the empire's history roughly at the time of his arrival in the capital, in the mid-thirties of the eleventh century. At this time he would have witnessed the beginning of Michael Psellos' "academic" and courtly career. One should not write about Attaleiates' intellectual formation without taking this into account. There is in fact no way that the young student could have failed to be exposed to the teaching of Psellos.[4] Either as his disciple or simply as a member of Psellos' audience Attaleiates would have heard the man he describes as the wisest among his contemporaries (*Hist.* 21) discussing anything from earthquakes and medicine to law, the occult, and religion.[5] The so-called reign of the philosophers had a profound effect on the educational and intellectual environment of the capital. Even legal studies, the chief field of interest of the young Attaleiates, were influenced, if only for a short while, by changes effected during the reign of Monomachos.[6] I posit that the early period of his life is as important for understanding his reading of Psellos as the developments in the later years that defined his social and political position. Even in this later period, the importance of Psellos cannot be underestimated. Of roughly 550 of the philosopher's surviving letters, 114 are addressed to Attaleiates' fellow judges. Those were people with legal schooling who were most likely to have made up, along other bureaucrats, the social circle of the similarly-trained Attaleiates.[7] Psellos either as a political agent or as an active intellectual could not be ignored.

Nevertheless, the facts of Attaleiates' biography are usually ignored. Instead, the orthodoxy in modern scholarship represents his relationship with Psellos as one of disjunction and friction. Within this analytical framework the two authors belong to different worlds. An influential study has even identified the patriarchs Keroularios and

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[3] Browning (1978) 35–54, Gautier (1981) 12 for origins and date of birth in the early 1020's, Kazhdan (1984) 84 for an unsubstantiated claim of Constantinopolitan birth.

[4] Attaleiates, *Diataxis*, 29–31 [f13v 209–210] for Attaleiates' reference to studying philosophy, rhetoric and law.

[5] Lemerle (1969) 4 on education in the capital, "On Earthquakes—On thunder" in *Phil. min.* I.92.

[6] Wolska-Conus (1976) 225–237 on the intertwining of legal, rhetorical and philosophical studies.

[7] Limousin (1999) 364.

Xiphilinos as people likely to hover in Attaleiates' social horizon. Michael Psellos and the intellectuals around him are oddly not part of this picture. In this scenario Attaleiates emerges as a spokesperson for the interests of the military aristocracy.[8] Psellos on the other hand, the archetypical courtier, is the brilliant manipulator of words and people, whose psychological profiles of Byzantine rulers infuse the history of his times with vibrancy and whose intellectual achievement irrevocably shapes our perception of Byzantine intellectual life.[9] Attaleiates, in comparison, is seen as an honest, nice fellow, inexplicably loyal to one of the least effective emperors in the history of the empire: Nikephoros III Botaneiates.[10] The two men come from different worlds; Psellos from the contemplative realm of philosophy and the politics of the palace's inner *sanctum*, Attaleiates from the world of jurisprudential punctiliousness.[11]

To try to overcome this problematic comparison I will explore the relationship between the historical texts written by these two authors. The treatment of Psellos and Attaleiates as spokesmen of rival political groups is by itself, I believe, an inadequate tool for understanding their intellectual and political outlook. Thus in the first part of this paper I will chart what I see as evidence of dialogue between the two authors. In what is in effect an eloquent expression of a political discourse that transcended the pages of their texts, we shall see that Psellos acts and Attaleiates reacts. At this stage the focus will be on the articulation of dissension. However, the writers of the *Chronographia* and the *Historia* in fact often agree on prescriptive statements even when disagreeing in their political affiliations. The second part of the paper examines evidence of intellectual affinity that goes against the notion of a relationship

[8] An odd proposition given that Xiphilinos was part of the circle of exactly those intellectuals around Psellos that would have influenced Attaleiates early on in life. Kazhdan (1984) 85–86: the affiliation with Keroularios and Xiphilinos. Kazhdan's Attaleiates is a member of urban elites who seek the help of the feudal lords to gain protection from state autocracy. Also see the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* vol. 1 (229) where Kazdhan notes that 'The History is a rhetorical panegyric of Nicephoros III.'

[9] Tinnefeld (1971) 130 on Psellos as a member of the civilian class at court, Limousin (1999) 346, Hussey (1935) 81–82.

[10] Attaleiates, *Diataxis*, 103 (f76 1365–f77 1378) Attaleiates' honesty as recognized in the *chrysoboullon* by Michael VII Doukas, Attaleiates, *Hist.* 3–6 *prooimoion.*

[11] Gautier (1976) 85 l.50–51 on Psellos and the palace's inner sanctum, Attaleiates, *Historia* 256: where Attaleiates uses his role as judge to pass judgment on Botaneiates. Krumbacher (1897) 271.

conceived as inherently antagonistic and challenges simplistic and often meaningless categorizations.[12]

For instance, had Psellos and Attaleiates concluded their historical works with the reign of Isaac Komnenos we would be dealing with a very different set of questions. Their texts, when it comes to the period up to this emperor's reign, are, more or less, in agreement.[13] In fact Psellos' first draft of the *Chronographia*, compiled under Constantine X Doukas, ended with the reign of Isaac.[14] The bulk of Attaleiates' *Historia*, however, follows this reign. To a casual reader this early period in Attaleiates' account may appear as an abbreviation of Psellos' text. It is as if a writer of what Polybius would call πραγματικὴ ἱστορία had intervened in Psellos' account, removed the excess palace material, and created a story based on the main events punctuating this era's history.[15] Psellos' own subsequent coverage of the reigns of the two Doukai emperors, and of Romanos IV Diogenes, was not properly integrated in the main body of the *Chronographia*. In the case of the reign of Romanos IV Diogenes, he is no longer simply a critical observer. He takes sides and, when he critiques, he does so in a polemical fashion. His narrative no longer bears the imprint of the philosophical approach that has recently been detected in the first draft of the *Chronographia*.[16] As for Attaleiates, from the reign of Constantine X Doukas onwards he seems to be on a collision course with this new, less subtle, political and partisan Psellos. I will shed some light on the ways Attaleiates uses and manipulates Psellos' positions to produce a politicized account of these latter years. Yet, even in the period after the reign of Isaac, when the two authors express their hostility to one another's political positions in their texts, there are elements in the *Chronographia* and the *Historia* that speak of an underlying understanding. While Psellos' account of the reigns of the Doukai emperors is laudatory on the surface, a distinct sense of irony colors his narrative. The *enkomion* of his student Michael VII

[12] Cheynet (1990) 261–286 for an eloquent rejection of traditional distinctions in Byzantine aristocracy.

[13] We have the significant exception of Paraspondylos about whom there is clear disagreement between the two authors. *Chron.* 6a.6–10, Attaleiates, *Hist.* 52.

[14] Criscuolo (1982) 201 in the footnotes for dating of the two parts. Kaldellis (1999) 11 on dating.

[15] Pédech (1964) 22–32 for the notion of πραγματικὴ ἱστορία.

[16] Kaldellis (1999).

is riddled with double-entendres and back-handed compliments. For all that he rushes to the defense of his pupil, especially in the case of the Romanos' blinding, he does construct an ambivalent portrait. This ambivalence may inform Attaleiates' own encomium of Nikephoros III Botaneiates, characterized as it is by a similar mix of sycophancy and irony. The actual content of Psellos' "hidden" critique would have left Attaleiates nodding with approval and vice versa.

Therefore it seems that something changed after the reign of Isaac. A raging, political row in the ranks of the courtiers led Psellos to add to the *Chronographia* the polemical and sycophantic second part. The character of this text underlines the pressures Psellos found himself under during Michael VII's reign as he was seeking to guarantee his position and rebut accusations regarding his involvement in the blinding of Romanos IV Diogenes. Attaleiates, on the other hand, despite his good official relationship with the regime of the Doukai, clearly did not feel comfortable with their policies.[17] He held both Michael VII and Psellos, his apologist, responsible for the blinding of Diogenes.[18] As a consequence, his use of the *Chronographia* changes after the reign of Constantine X Doukas. He no longer sympathetically nods at Psellos' narrative, but rather consciously subverts it. The instances of his, more or less evident, yet so far undetected, use of Psellos' text as material to be recycled for purposes of polemic will be the ultimate focus of my attention.

The correspondence between the *Chronographia* and the *Historia* is most evident in the cardinal point of disagreement between their two authors: namely the reign of Romanos IV Diogenes. Attaleiates used Psellos' writings to deconstruct the latter's thesis regarding the role of Romanos in the events of the late sixties and early seventies. The first point of reference is Psellos' opinion regarding Romanos' desire to go to war immediately upon his rise to the throne:

> I, however, following my habit of offering advice to the rulers, tried to control the man and asserted that first he had to consider the

[17] Attaleiates, *Diataxis*, 103 (f76 1365–f77 1378): on benefits from the Doukai.

[18] Attaleiates, *Hist.* 176 despite the modern focus on the Kaisar Ioannes, Attaleiates himself seems to also have Psellos in mind when writing his famous address to Michael VII Doukas starting with the words: "What do you say o emperor and those close to you who ordered . . ." Vryonis (2003) 6 for similar suspicions.

> condition of the army, call a muster roll [of the troops], and add foreign allies, so that he could chose to fight with everything in order (*Chron.* 7b.12).

This critique provided Psellos with a background against which to present Romanos as an irrational, warlike emperor who

> donning his armor already in the palace and taking a shield with his left hand and a huge lance welded with clinchers, twenty two forearms long in the right, fooled himself that with the former he would block the enemies' attacks and with the latter he would flank them (*Chron.* 7b.12).

This broad condemnation of Romanos' policies, essential to Psellos' exculpation of the Doukai for their suspected treachery at Mantzikert and for the emperor's blinding, is meticulously deconstructed by the author of the *Historia.* In order to detract from Psellos' vignette of a man irrationally devoted to the idea of war, Attaleiates begins his account of Romanos before his rise to power with an account of the reasons that led him to seek the throne. Where Psellos insists that Romanos was moved by a desire to install a τυραννίς, Attaleiates notes that:

> having realized in the past that the enemy succeeded by reason of our leadership and failings attributable to it, and that they were becoming stronger as a result of the pettiness of the Romans, he was highly disturbed and was considering rebellion not out of love of rule or desire to enjoy power, but in order to restore the fortunes of the Romans, who had already fallen, as affairs were not being administered according to reason.[19]

Romanos is not motivated by a desire to ascend to the throne for the sake of power. The allegations of tyrannical aspirations are directly answered as Romanos is shown to be a patriot with a plan. His campaigning was to rectify ills, the responsibility for which Attaleiates squarely laid on the doorstep of the previous ruler, Constantine X (*Hist.* 76–79). After this first step, Attaleiates introduces further attacks on Psellos' thesis. While Psellos disputes Romanos' campaign preparations, Attaleiates offers evidence of precisely such military

[19] See *Chron.* 7b.10 on tyrannical aspirations; Attaleiates, *Hist.* 97 on reason and rebellion for the benefit of the state.

preparations. Thus in 1068 the emperor departed for the land of the themes where:

> The leaders of the *tagmata* were mustered through orders already received and [with them] those who made up the ranks of each formation . . . and the emperor declared a muster roll and from each province and town assembled the youth and with ranks and gifts restored their courage and in a short while replenished the ranks of the *tagmata*. He carefully appointed officers over them from among the ablest and, mixing with them the troops that came from the west, he constituted in little time a decent fighting force (*Hist.* 103–104).

There is a direct correspondence between Psellos' "advice" to Romanos and Attaleiates' presentation of Diogenes' Asia Minor campaign. Psellos advised Romanos to proceed on campaign only after he had recruited more soldiers, created new military rolls, and added mercenaries. Attaleiates tells us that Romanos met and surpasses each and every one of these requirements. Attaleiates specifically refers to the reviewing of the κατάλογος στρατιωτικός. He then points to the use of mercenaries and above all presents a process of recruitment and preparation that is conducted in accordance with λόγος.[20] His argument, however, is even subtler. When referring to Romanos' proper selection of officers, it may be that he is drawing the reader's attention to another part of Psellos' narrative, where Basil II is praised for his proper knowledge of the duties of officers and his reasonable selection of men for positions of command (*Chron.* 1.32). At the same time the reference to Romanos' use of ἀξιώματα καὶ δῶρα as incentives for the recruitment of soldiers echoes Psellos' famous quasi-prescriptive statement according to which:

> Two things, above all others, contribute to the preservation of Roman rule; I refer to the system of honors and ranks and to finances, and I hasten to add a third [factor]; the reasonable administration of both, and the use of discretion in the apportioning of resources.[21]

Attaleiates shows Romanos using ἀξιώματα καὶ δῶρα ἐμφρόνως to restore the Roman state. His answer turns the reader's attention to

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[20] Attaleiates, *Hist.* 97: Diogenes is angry that things are run mh£ kata£ lo¯gon.

[21] *Chron.* 6.29: Δύο τοίνυν τούτων τὴν Ῥωμαίων συντηρούντων ἡγεμονίαν, ἀξιωμάτων φημὶ καὶ χρημάτων, καί τινος ἔξω τρίτου, ἔμφρονος περὶ ταῦτα ἐπιστασίας καὶ τοῦ λογισμῷ χρῆσθαι περὶ τὰς διανεμήσεις. Also see Psellos on his account of Michael IV's preparations for war against Deljan, *Chron.* 4.43.

inconsistencies in Psellos' narrative, forcing the great philosopher to face none other than himself in the refutation of his polemic. The deconstruction of the image of a reckless Romanos forces upon the reader the question of the Doukai's treason at Mantzikert and their involvement in the blinding of the heroic emperor.[22] To that we will turn below.

Another point where the two texts seem to correspond is the issue of the foreign mercenaries. Psellos claims that Romanos ought to have followed an active policy of recruiting foreign troops before setting out on campaign. Yet, the Patzinakoi recruited by Romanos were of a variety previously denigrated by Psellos. According to him, they were without exception vile men who showed no respect for oaths. They upheld no treaties or other agreements even if those were consecrated with blood sacrifices according to their own rites (*Chron.* 7.69). Attaleiates begs to differ with this view. Romanos had Scythian (Patzinakoi) mercenaries in his army and, to dispel suspicions that existed regarding their loyalty, Attaleiates, as a historical character in his own work, suggested that he should tie them to the Romans by administering oaths κατὰ τὸ πάτριον. The result was unlike what one would expect having read Psellos: the Patzinakoi were turned to ἀκριβεῖς τῶν σπονδῶν φύλακες (*Hist.* 159). Attaleiates at this point tackles an issue that had emerged at a part of Psellos' narrative that was not directly linked with either the events of Mantzikert or the demise of Romanos. Psellos discusses the Patzinakoi in his account of Balkan warfare in the reign of Isaac Komnenos.[23] Tenuous as the connection may be between those two different appearances of barbarians in their respective texts, it does highlight something larger than Psellos' mistrust of barbarians. In a battle decided by treason perpetrated by Psellos' patrons, the presence of barbarians that were more loyal to king and country than Psellos or the Doukai is a telling condemnation of the latter two. At the same time, Psellos' own excursus on the Patzinakoi includes an odd statement with regard to their belief system. In order to explain their perfidy and oath-breaking Psellos notes that for them death was the

[22] Psellos, *Chron.* 7b.22: even Psellos cannot deny the heroism of the emperor. Interestingly enough, however, to weaken his admission that the emperor had been brave, he accentuates the fact that he was not an eye-witness and had heard it from others.

[23] *Chron.* 7.69.

absolute end of all life, bodily and spiritual. Their decisions seem to be informed by a lack of belief in afterlife or the prospect of eternal damnation. Such an image, more likely the object of a philosophical treatise than the product of a nomadic mind, allows Attaleiates to turn our attention to what was probably a subtle, yet highly contentious philosophical point placed by Psellos in the midst of his narrative, namely the absence of afterlife and the lack of accountability of people to forces other than those present in everyday societal interaction.[24]

This instance is indicative of the depth of engagement required for the deconstruction of a political rival's written work. Only total immersion in the relevant texts made an effective and yet subtle political argument possible. The notion of total immersion highlights an oft-ignored aspect of Byzantine culture, namely the conscious effort of readers to seriously engage with the implications of other people's writings.[25] In this case-study I argue that in dealing with the work of Psellos, Attaleiates did not, like modern scholars do, simply attempt to check the philosopher's facts. He considered the implications of his interlocutor's writings and proceeded to engage with them treating the *Chronographia* not as an agglomeration of narrated events but rather as an organic whole to be read from cover to cover.[26] Thus, in focusing on the Patzinakoi, Attaleiates not only exposed Psellos' political amoralism but also highlighted the philosopher's advocacy of amoral politics.[27]

Further developing his idiosyncratic *psogos*, Psellos describes Romanos' Asia Minor campaigns as aimless wandering around the lands of the empire (*Chron.* 7b.13, 17). By contrast Attaleiates carefully lays out the details of the campaign addressing Psellos' critique point by point. Where the latter notes that no barbarians were arrested, the former explains that a lot of them died simply trying to flee an emperor whose reputation was that of a great warrior.[28] Where Psellos' emphasis is on aimless movement, Attaleiates focuses on the proper combination

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[24] A proposition that would be in sync with Psellos' implicit argument that immorality in government is nearly essential. See Kaldellis (1999) 66–77 "An Impious Doctrine."

[25] Sevventi (2001) 267–302.

[26] Kekaumenos, *Strategikon* (ed. Spadaro) III 142 (194v).

[27] Kaldellis (1999) 67–77.

[28] *Chron.* 7b.17: actually three were arrested. Attaleiates, *Hist.* 107 [on the 1068 campaign], 126 [the 1069 campaign].

of fresh and seasoned troops, on successful pursuit of the enemy, as well as on the very real benefit accruing from the capture of Hierapolis.[29] Finally where in Psellos' text bad advisors had fed the emperor's ambition, Attaleiates now steps into their shoes and presents a scene in which, speaking against the grain of the emperor's opinion, he opposed his views as well as those of the other advisors. Among those advisors was, one may assume, Psellos, reluctantly following the army at the emperor's command (*Chron.* 7b.15).

In the *Chronographia*, in the midst of his discussion of military affairs, Psellos switches gears and refers to Romanos' desire to rid himself of the empress Eudokia.[30] His positioning of the material on Eudokia and her relationship with Romanos is directly mirrored in Attaleiates' account. Attaleiates notes that in the spring of 1071, as Romanos was crossing the Hellespont to prepare for what was to be his last campaign against the Turks, he sent to the empress a black pigeon that had landed on the royal ship. Attaleiates notes that the empress, who had for a certain period of time been cold towards Romanos, was moved by this and crossed to Asia in order to spend time with him before his departure on campaign. The difference between the two narratives could not have been greater. In Psellos' narrative it is Romanos who is scheming against Eudokia and treats her oppressively. In Attaleiates' narrative it is Eudokia who is cold and distant for reasons consigned to the bedchamber. Moreover, before his departure for the Mantzikert campaign she once again warms up to Romanos (*Hist.* 143). It is not simply the tit-for-tat aspect of Attaleiates' narrative that is curious, but also the choice of time and space in his text that reinforces the idea that we are dealing with a conscious effort to address Psellos' polemic. It is certainly no coincidence that both authors place the discussion of the empress' attitudes vis-à-vis Romanos at this particular moment of their discussion of military affairs.

I will conclude this part of the paper with three excerpts from the *Chronographia* and the *Historia* that further highlight Attaleiates' detailed use of Psellos' text for his own authorial and political purposes. I begin with Attaleiates' position regarding Psellos' claim that Romanos' arrogance did not allow him to accept advice in issues of strategy

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[29] Attaleiates, *Hist.* 116–7 [for Hierapolis], 126–7 [for combination of fresh and seasoned troops].

[30] *Chron.* 7b.18. To that he adds a line on the suspicions Romanos entertained against the Kaisar Ioannes Doukas.

(*Chron.* 7b.19). Psellos develops this idea at the opening of his account of Mantzikert. Attaleiates has a very different story. Positioned in the *Historia*'s account of Romanos' 1069 campaign, Attaleiates' *parrhesia* in the presence of the emperor regarding his eastern policy is constructed as a direct answer to Psellos' allegations. Attaleiates notes on this occasion that "having said that to the emperor, my words entered the emperor['s mind] as some seed in a good fertile land."[31] The mind of the emperor was receptive to well articulated argumentation. Psellos, who apparently lost the argument to Attaleiates in the aforementioned scene, proceeded to label Romanos as arrogant, haughty, and closed to advice.[32] Attaleiates' response is all the more poignant for reminding Psellos that for all that he considered himself an expert on strategy he was ignored. Attaleiates, who makes no claims of omniscience, though as a historian he does express an interest in advising emperors akin to that of Psellos, seems to succeed where Psellos fails (*Hist.* 193–4). Psellos, as if to preempt Attaleiates' line of argument, noted in the *Chronographia* that Romanos was under the influence of παραινέσεις κακοήθεσιν (*Chron.* 7b.16). Moreover, he develops forthwith his most devastating attack on Romanos' legacy just before he embarks upon the description of the battle at Mantzikert noting that:

> [Romanos'] strategic ignorance led him to divide his forces, himself keeping part and sending the rest to another location. And though it was necessary to face the enemy with the totality of his army, he instead faced them with only a small part (*Chron.* 7b.20).

This is an effort to place the blame for the defeat squarely on the emperor's shoulders. Romanos split the army and as a result faced the Sultan with forces greatly diminished. In Psellos' account of Romanos' actions in the *Chronographia* the relationship between the courtier and the emperor is constructed as a rhetorical debate. Psellos won this debate and he claims that there had been an audience that could attest to this oratorical triumph (*Chron.* 7b.16). Given his latter involvement in Romanos' deposition and blinding, it suited him to construct a relationship with the emperor where his own expertise was highlighted in stark contrast to the ineptitude of Romanos. The immorality of the blinding was to be mitigated by evidence of the

[31] Attaleiates, *Hist.* 131 brackets mine.
[32] Bryennios, *Hist.* 1.14 for the 1071 tent scene.

emperor's mismanagement of state affairs. Before his account of the battle of Mantzikert, Psellos describes his own knowledge of things military, his study of tactics and strategy and, interestingly, his understanding of siege warfare.[33] Attaleiates in dealing with Psellos' narrative tactics, attempted to undermine them by focusing on the detail of campaigning and on the practical aspect of ruling. Where Psellos presents himself as a master of siege warfare, Attaleiates' Romanos effectively arranges, builds, and uses siege machines, to successfully capture a city.[34] Where Psellos criticizes his tactical arrangements, namely the division of the army, Attaleiates offers a direct answer:

> For this *reason* he divided the army which [division] was in no way **unreasonable**, nor against strategic **reasoning**. As for the ***hoi polloi*** ignoring the cause of the division, they accuse him that he divided the army at an inopportune moment.[35]

The division of the army is οὐκ ἄλογος according to Attaleiates. As for the people who criticize Romanos for it, they are placed alongside the πολλοί. Ironically Psellos is now dispatched to the world of the *hoi polloi*. Moreover, as Attaleiates notes, the failure of the division of the army was due to factors beyond human control. The surprise appearance of the Sultan in Armenia was something that one could not have predicted on the basis of available information. A suspicion of divine intervention is planted and the workings of the divine are unknown to men. Attaleiates thus demolishes Psellos' claim that he knew of the Sultan's presence and establishes Romanos as a ruler acting within the boundaries of logic (*Hist.* 150–151). Even better, by referring to the existence of precedents for the division of the army, Attaleiates may actually be referring to the text of Psellos itself. In the *Chronographia* when describing the rebellion of Phokas and Skleros against Basil II, Psellos notes that after coming to an agreement, "the two men, dividing their forces in two, substantially

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[33] Psellos, *Chron.* 7b.16.3–6: ὡς δέ με εἶδε τὴν τακτικὴν ἐπιστήμην ἠκριβωκότα καὶ ὅσα περὶ λόχους καὶ τάξεις, καὶ ὅσα περὶ μηχανημάτων κατασκευὰς, καὶ ἁλώσεις πόλεων, καὶ τἄλλα ὅσα στρατηγικῶν εἰσι διατάξεων . . .

[34] Attaleiates, *Hist.* 151: the fortress of Manzikert.

[35] Attaleiates, *Hist.* 150–151: καὶ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἡ διαίρεσις αὐτῷ τοῦ στρατοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἄλογος γέγονε, καί γε ἦν οὐκ ἀπὸ λογισμοῦ στρατηγικοῦ ἐννόημα . . . οἱ δὲ πολλοί, ἀγνοοῦντες τὸ τῆς διαιρέσεως αἴτιον, μῶμον ἐκείνῳ προσάπτουσιν ὡς οὐκ εἰς δέον ποιησαμένῳ τὸν τοῦ στρατοῦ διαμερισμόν. Also see Polybios, *Hist.* 1.18.2.

reinforced the rebellion" (*Chron.* 1.12). He describes two generals doing exactly what Romanos had done: dividing their forces. The end result is, however, very different in those two cases. Attaleiates, by referring to the logic of the division, may be drawing Psellos' attention back to his own writings.

Finally, the direct link between the two men is confirmed when we approach the part of their texts where events turn sour, with the arrest and blinding of Romanos. At a similar point in their texts the two authors note:

> To this point our narration proceeded without confusion or impediments; even if unpleasant issues were presented. From this point onwards, who will recount in detail the plethora of sad occurrences? The task set before me is not only irksome but also difficult to tackle because of its unforgiving bleakness.[36]

> To this point my narration has run on a smooth path, or according to the Holy Writ, set on the royal road. From here on I hesitate to proceed and recount an action which should not have occurred, yet for me to contradict myself, had to take place. On the one hand because of piety and respect for God, on the other, because of the state of affairs and fear of future troubles.[37]

Attaleiates introduces his account of the brief civil war between Romanos' forces and the troops of Michael VII with this snippet. Psellos uses similar phraseology to discuss the specifics of the blinding of Romanos.[38] In any case, one excerpt is evidently influenced by the other. What is, however, missing from Attaleiates' text is Psellos' justification and rationalization of the events. Thus we find ourselves faced with a rather interesting conundrum. The *Chronographia* is to this day rightly treated as prior to the *Historia*. In what we read, however, the logical order of the texts is reversed. Psellos'

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[36] Attaleiates, *Hist.* 167–8: Μέχρι μὲν οὖν τούτων ἀσύγχυτος ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος καὶ οἷον ἀπερικτύπητος καὶ ὁμαλώτερον βαίνων, κἂν εἰ καὶ προσάντεις εἶχε καὶ οἰκτρὰς τὰς ἐπεξηγήσεις. τὸ δ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε τίς ἂν κατὰ μέρος τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἐπισυμβάντων χαλεπῶν διηγήσαιτο; οὐ πρόσαντες ἡμῖν τὸ προκείμενον μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ λίαν ἀπρόσβατον διὰ τὴν τῶν γενομένων ἀπηνῆ σκυθρωπότητα.

[37] *Chron.* 7b.42: Τὸ μὲν οὖν μέχρι τοῦδε εὔδρομος ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, καὶ διὰ λείας φέρων καὶ βασιλικῆς τῆς ὁδοῦ, ταῦτα δὴ τὰ θεολογικὰ ῥήματα· τὸ δ' ἐντεῦθεν ὀκνεῖ περαιτέρω χωρεῖν καὶ διηγήσασθαι πρᾶξιν, ἣν οὐκ ἔδει μὲν γενέσθαι, ἵνα δὴ παρὰ βραχὺ ταὐτολογήσας ἐρῶ, ἔδει δὴ γενέσθαι παντάπασι, τὸ μὲν διὰ τὴν εὐσέβειαν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸ δεινὸν εὐλάβειαν, τὸ δὲ διὰ τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων περίστασιν καὶ τὴν τοῦ καιροῦ περιπέτειαν.

[38] *Chron.* 7b.30: here Psellos assumes full responsibility for running affairs in Constantinople.

account is apologetic and aims to exculpate the new emperor, while Attaleiates' account bears the imprints of a prosecutorial narrative. While this is no proof of chronological precedence in composition, this observation begs a series of questions regarding the broader debate which developed in the empire concerning the particular event. The blinding of Romanos was perceived as a heinous crime at the time and even future generations treated Romanos with sympathy.[39] This inversion of the direction of communication between the texts alludes to a body of narrative, oral or written, preceding the second part of the *Chronographia*, which forced Psellos to address it in his argument. Attaleiates, who may even have been among the generators of such a narrative, echoes it when he writes the *Historia*. As a result, the relationship between the texts becomes confused as they are the product of an ongoing political debate that was not confined to their pages.

Having presented Attaleiates' use of the *Chronographia* in his *Historia* and the position of those two texts in the political debates of the 1070s, an image emerges of disjunction and hostility that conforms to modern scholarship's stereotypical notion regarding the relationship of the two authors. Yet, as already noted, there is, despite the clear disagreements, evidence that the two authors shared far more than our assumptions regarding their different political affiliations have allowed. Once we focus on the moments of agreement between them, the differences highlighted above can be seen under a different light. Instead of being treated as spokesmen for different political camps, Psellos and Attaleiates can be seen as men of similar educational and social background, who shared a lot, yet at the same time had formed, through their personal involvement in public affairs, different opinions regarding the solutions to the empire's problems.

For such an analysis to be possible, we need to return to the moments of agreement evident in the first part of the *Chronographia* and the *Historia*. Those instances operate as a backdrop for more "intangible" points of contact at the level of their general political view. The period in question spans the years from the reign of Michael IV in the 1030s to that of Isaac Komnenos in the mid to late 1050s. Covering that era, the two authors develop a number of themes in strikingly similar fashion. Nevertheless, for methodological

[39] *Timarion* 22.514–565.

purposes we need to distinguish between two types of agreement. There is agreement that results from the engagement of the authors with indisputable facts and there is also similarity of opinion regarding those same facts. We are mainly interested in the second variety. Thus when both authors stress the sense of duty as well as the service to the empire of the sickly Michael IV, it appears that we are dealing with a perception commonly shared among contemporaries.[40] Yet as both texts elaborate on Michael's dysfunctional extended family as an introduction to the fateful reign of Michael V, we are entering the realm of more personal opinion. This concordance of judgment is of concern to our analysis. Michael V Kalaphates and the violation of his most holy oaths to Zoe are of interest to both authors as the theme of oath-breaking is shared by Psellos' and Attaleiates' narratives.[41] The description of Michael V's destruction of his own family network is perceived by both as central to the understanding of the unraveling of his regime. Attaleiates' account is clearly derivative from Psellos when he notes:

> As for his relatives who were rich and were hated by the people because of their cruelty, he removed them [from power]. Their chief, the monk John Orphanotrophos, who had royal oversight over state affairs, he condemned to irrevocable exile, while the rest [of his relatives], those who were of age, but also the adolescents, he castrated. And in this fashion he destroyed his family, which the συνετοί/ interpreted as mindless zealotry, as he thus deprived himself of so much assistance and family help (*Hist.* 12).

On that same issue Psellos similarly had noted that:

> Once the ruler dispatched John Orphanotrophos, as if he were bringing down the [main] pillar [of their *oikos*], he was in a hurry to dig up the foundations too. So, all his relatives, most of whom were already of age, had grown beards, had become fathers and had been entrusted with the most solemn of offices, he castrated leaving them in life half-dead (*Chron.* 5.42).

In both passages the emphasis lies on the gradual destruction of the family of the emperor. Both devote to John Orphanotrophos, the

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[40] *Chron.* 4.54–55, devotion to duty despite malady Psellos, *Chron.* 4.43, Attaleiates, *Hist.* 9–11.

[41] *Chron.* 5.4, Attaleiates, *Hist.* 11. On the breaking of oaths seen in Psellos note Kaldellis (1999) 113. In Psellos it is only Batatzes and Psellos himself who respect oaths. In Attaleiates I note that only barbarians do so.

main target of the emperor's wrath, as much space as is granted to all the rest of Michael's relatives. The other common element is the reference to the castration of all the male members of the family, an indirect metaphor for the destruction of this family as an imperial line. In presenting the events in an admittedly derivative fashion Attaleiates adds a comment that seems to be an allusion to his source. He indicates that according to the συνετοὶ this attack on the family was evidence of ἄφρων ζῆλος. The emphasis on the συνετοὶ in the *Historia* highlights, as will be shown below, Attaleiates' link, at this moment in time, to the most wise and prudent of men: Psellos himself. Yet there is another level of affinity between the two authors in play here. Michael V's maniacal attack on his family seems to run against the basic ideas they shared on the issue of family. Psellos was at his most humane when discussing his family and Attaleiates' concerns with the establishment of a viable line of successors to his own position are evident in his *Diataxis*, where the groundwork is laid for his son's safe assumption of control over the property he had amassed during his years of service. To them Michael's behavior was a bad model not simply on the political but more broadly on the social level.

The two men also seem to share a fascination with the popular uprising that led to Michael V's fall. Their reports on the riot are different in some of their constitutive elements yet there is an agreement as to the basics. Moreover, the spontaneous reaction of the populace evidently caught their imagination. In Attaleiates' words,

> But as if marshaled by a higher force [which infused them] with noble designs, they acquired even greater courage.[42]

Psellos in turn had noted that:

> And all of them, as if inspired by a superior power, were in no way reminiscent of their previous state of soul, but [rather] their running was manic and their hands stronger than ever.[43]

In both accounts the operation of a power above human nature is implied. Moreover, there is a change in the behavior of the people who become stronger than in their normal condition in life. The fascination of the two historians with this moment of δημοκρατία,

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[42] Attaleiates, *Hist.* 15: ὥσπερ ἄνωθεν στρατηγούμενοι.
[43] *Chron.* 5.28: ὥσπερ γάρ τινος ξύμπαντες κρείττονος μετεσχηκότες πνεύματος.

which Psellos describes as the most important event in the *Chronographia*, requires an explanation. Anthony Kaldellis suggests that in his account of the rebellion Psellos discusses providence and places the seeds of a challenge to its value as an explanatory tool. In his analysis, Psellos, through this account, makes plain that for every event there is a clear chain of causation to be followed unrelated to divine forces.[44] Attaleiates may be following this same line. In his own text, the events narrated are educative for future generations who are thus shown that disloyalty could result in dire consequences (*Hist.* 17). He too seems to attribute the fall of Michael V to bad politics. As for divine providence, in the form of δίκη, she punished the emperor. The divinely sanctioned punishment ironically entails a break of the law on asylum. Attaleiates' divine providence is transgressing the boundaries of the sacred in meting out justice. Might we have then a moment where Attaleiates recognizes the purpose of Psellos and offers his agreement through a similarly structured narrative?

There is also the apparent suspicion that both men share, regarding the role of Alexios Stoudites in the aforementioned events. Yet this attitude is not expressed in the same way. Attaleiates ironically notes that the patriarch—a just man who had remained inactive in the early stages of the controversy regarding the deposition of the last Macedonian heiress, the empress Zoe—was forced by the rebellious rabble to support the empress in her struggle against Michael V's injustice. The notion that a just man would have to be forced to take sides on an issue involving justice is indicative of Attaleiates' cynical attitude (*Hist.* 15–16). Psellos, on the other hand, discusses the patriarch at a different point in his narrative, when, at the ceremony for the wedding of Zoe to Monomachos, Alexios finds a flexible formula for not sanctioning the union while at the same time showing his approval. Psellos does not restrain himself here and goes beyond Attaleiates' irony, noting:

> I do not know whether this was more hieratic or sycophantic and adapted to [the needs of] the moment (*Chron.* 6.20).

The two authors also share a sarcastic, if not rabid, anti-monasticism and fully approve of Isaac Komnenos' fiscal measures despite their high-handedness. In fact their agreement on the issue of Isaac

[44] Kaldellis (1999) 104–6.

Komnenos' policies seems to point towards a very similar understanding of the exigencies of government. They are willing to accept a harsh taxation regime if it is geared towards funding the proper causes, which both historians define as the support of the army and the proper utilization of the empire's system of honors.[45] At the same time they also seem to accept the need for the emperor's occasional annulment of prior laws and privileges for reasons of state interest.[46] Their evident disapproval of Keroularios' high-handedness and pretensions of power highlight their common position on a matter as central to Byzantine politics as the relationship between patriarch and emperor (*Chron.* 7.65, *Hist.* 62–65). In the case of Psellos, the effort to apportion blame to both emperor and patriarch in the affair of Keroularios' deposition is, to say the least, half-hearted:

> I blame the [patriarch] for the beginning and the [emperor] for the end [of the affair] and for having rid himself of him as if he were an onerous burden.

Psellos, while appearing to be distributing blame to both, is in fact constructing a sentence where Keroularios is worse off as he is tied to the ἀρχῇ of the crisis.[47] At the same time, in a sentence which does not refer to either of the two actors directly by name, the patriarch is the one treated as an ἐπωμάδιον ἄχθος that needs to be dumped. Attaleiates, on the other hand, also records that the beginning of the affair could be put down to the fact that the patriarch

> At that time was full of pride . . . and thought he was master over all, having propped himself above his [due] place and very often tried to dissuade [the emperor] from actions he did not approve, sometimes advising him like a father and other times censoring and threatening him (*Hist.* 62).

This slowly aggravated the emperor as, in the words of Attaleiates, he was not used to criticism; or, as Psellos noted, Isaac disliked

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[45] *Chron.* 6.29, and 4.19 on Michael IV and his use of gifts and the army to fend off enemies, Attaleiates, *Hist.* 60–63 for the reign of Isaakios.

[46] *Chron.* 1.20.20–22 on Basileios II and his plundering of the monastery of Parakoimomenos and 7.60 on Isaakios' pun, Attaleiates, *Historia*, 61–62 on Isaakios' play of words, Garland (1999) 341. Attaleiates here either directly copies Psellos or simply agrees with him that recording the evidence of Basileios II's and Isaakios Komennos' anti-monastic jokes was an important statement to be placed in their works.

[47] The search for ἀρχαί and αἰτίαι being central to Psellos' narrative [see *Chron.* 4.24.1 on the ἀρχη of Michael V's fall].

τῶν . . . ἐλέγχων οὐ μόνον τοὺς δημοσίους, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς τεχνικούς (*Chron.* 7.64). As for the end of the affair, Attaleiates is even more sarcastic, as he attributes it to God who takes Keroularios from the world of the living thereby offering the best (κρεῖττόν τι προβλεψαμένου) solution to the crisis facing the emperor (*Hist.* 65). Psellos however, is simply outrageous when he describes the announcement of Keroularios' death to Isaac as *euangelia.* There is a possibility that Attaleiates is referring to Psellos himself when he attributes to certain among the emperor's advisors and to their νεανιεύματα the idea of staging a synod for the prosecution of Keroularios. Yet despite the possibility that we may be witnessing here an indirect jab of one author at the other, the broad sense emerging from the two texts is one of accord.

This comparison between the *Chronographia* and the *Historia* suggests that the agreement of the first part of those accounts extends beyond the level of factual history to underlying assumptions on issues of political and cultural importance.[48] This can be further demonstrated when we focus on their development of the notion of the "ideal ruler," the element of causation, and the importance of the classically inspired idea of autopsy in their texts. In the case of Psellos, his status as an eye-witness recorder of events is presented page after page as he intricately weaves himself into the narrative. The avowal that his narration of the reign of Basil II was based on what he had witnessed and heard as a very young boy and was consequently deficient in its account of the emperor's early years—which he had not experienced—is an indication of the importance Psellos attributes to autopsy (*Chron.* 1.4). Early in the *Chronographia*, Psellos defines his subject in relation to himself as a writer. Starting with the reign of Romanos III, Psellos claims greater accuracy which he attributes to his status as an eye-witness.[49] It is close to this point in the narrative that he presents his audience with his first confidential source from the world of the palace: a man who used to work at court under Romanos III and informed him of the love affair between the empress and the future Michael IV (Chr. 3.23). Soon after, Psellos

[48] Lounghes (1998) saw the similarities in Psellos' and Attaleiates' accounts in a thorough article on the rebellion of 1042.

[49] *Chron.* 3.1, we return to this period of Psellos' life in 4.12 when he opens the discussion of the early years of John Orphanotrophos.

appears as a direct observer of the emperor at state occasions, including his funeral. He was then sixteen years of age.[50] Under Michael IV, Psellos was already an accurate follower of events at court (4.14). This is the period when Attaleiates likewise enters the pages of the *Historia* as an autoptic recorder of events in the capital. His reference to the triumph celebrated by Michael IV for the end of his Bulgarian campaign is surely based on personal experience.[51] It is, however, with another procession, one that takes place before the aforementioned rebellion against Michael V, that Attaleiates makes his proper appearance as an eye-witness in the text and seeks to further connect himself to Psellos. The two authors focus on the adoration that common people of the market showed to Michael V. The pace and timing of Attaleiates' account mirrors that of Psellos.[52] Before presenting Michael V's imperial procession Attaleiates had referred to his attack on John Orphanotrophos and discussed the opinions of the συνετοί regarding this affair. Then he introduced the συνετότεροι and linked them to a disturbance in the schedule of the procession, which they interpreted as an omen foretelling Michael V's demise. The imperial possession itself is presented shortly prior to the emperor's action against the Augusta. In Psellos' text, the emperor's actions are preceded by the consultation of the wisest of advisors, seers and astrologers, and by a brief *excursus* on the merits and demerits of astrology (*Chron.* 5.20–21). According to the narrative, Michael V consulted the astrologers who asked him to not embark on his attempt at demoting the empress on the basis of what they saw in the stars. Michael then challenged their predictions arguing that he would prove them wrong (*Chron.* 5.20).

A review is in order. An immoderate emperor consults seers and astrologers and is asked to postpone his plans. Psellos pens in an *excursus* on the astrologers in his account of the events and notes that

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[50] *Chron.* 3.25 for state occasions, 4.4 for Romanos' funeral, Leon Diakonos, IV 7=65.9 as a precedent of an author stressing his first autoptic presence.

[51] Attaleiates, *Hist.* 10, Attaleiates, *Diataxis*, on studying in the "Queen of cities."

[52] Attaleiates, *Hist.* 12: "The chiefs of the guilds respectfully prepared the procession and covered the ground, from the palace all the way to the august and grand temple of God's Holy Wisdom, with richly woven silk garments, so that the emperor with his courtly entourage would pass through. After this, on the next Sunday, during the mounted procession the luxurious and valuable garments were [once again] laid [on the ground] and all kinds of other, gold and silver decorations were appended all the long of the course [of the procession]." This excerpt

he had studied their science, reserving, however, a final verdict on it. Michael V went against the advice of those men and failed miserably in his plans, thus establishing their credibility as predictors of the future. At the same time, Attaleiates refers to the συνετότεροι τῶν θεατῶν, a group of people who were able to interpret omens and had read the coming doom of Michael in the details of his imperial procession. The connection between Psellos with his superior knowledge of astronomical movements and those prudent men mentioned by Attaleiates is not difficult to draw. Its significance lies in its timing. This is a formative period in Attaleiates' life since, as a student in the "Queen of Cities," he was most certainly exposed to the teachings of Psellos, a man who in the words of the *Historia*, was distinguished above all of his contemporaries in wisdom (*Hist.* 21). Attaleiates' coming of age as an eye-witness is timed at the moment when his attendance of Psellos' lectures may be dated. This period coincides with the popular rebellion which Psellos described as the most important in the *Chronographia* (5.24).

Psellos and Attaleiates' emphasis on prudence and esoteric wisdom is a surprising point of contact in their works. This agreement may also be detected in their analysis of imperial rule. The author of the *Chronographia*, in at least two points in his narrative, openly states that there was not in his mind such a thing as a perfect ruler. Psellos notes in his treatment of Michael IV's reign that this emperor proved a steadfast defender of the Roman state and concerned himself with the problems τῆς ἀκριβοῦς τῶν πραγμάτων διοικήσεως (*Chron.* 4.8). That, however, was surprising to many, as he had also been an oath-breaker, an adulterer, and possibly a murderer (*Chron.* 4.7).[53] In fact Psellos notes that but for his family, Michael would have been one of the greatest emperors (*Chron.* 4.10). Then, in regards to

corresponds to Psellos' (*Chron.* 5.16) account which, however, intriguingly does not refer to a specific procession. Psellos more vaguely refers to the honors offered to the emperor by the people: "And thus his plans were fulfilled and he won to his side the elite of the Constantinopolitans as well as the merchants and the menial laborers with his generosity and largesse. As for them, they made their devotion plain and expressed it with extreme signs of outward respect. Thus they did not allow him to step on dirt but protested that it would be horrible if he did not proceed on carpets and if his horse were not covered with silk covers."

[53] Kaldellis (1999) 41–50 'the wicked doctrine' is Kaldellis' treatment of the necessity of amoral politics, 46: on the parallel of the glorious Macedonian dynasty springing out of murder, 134–5 notes Psellos' discussion of the technique of encomium and the desire to praise and at the same time criticize Michael IV.

Monomachos, Psellos notes that "nobody is blameless, but each person's character is judged by the element that dominates" (*Chron.* 6.26).

Attaleiates does not fully subscribe to this relativist position. Unlike Psellos, he does recognize the possibility of a link between political efficacy and proper moral behavior. Yet, his examples of morally correct and politically expeditious behavior are set in a world of barbarians and pagan Romans, and serve a narrative plan too complex to analyze in this paper. Inasmuch as he describes the deeds of Byzantine rulers of his times, there are no ideal heroes. Every positive comment is countered by something that to a lesser or greater degree besmirches their memory.[54] His two main models of good rulership, Isaac Komnenos and Romanos Diogenes, are ultimately flawed, failed leaders with human weaknesses that lead them to make mistakes. There is also Botaneiates, ostensibly the object of praise in the encomium attached to the *Historia.* Nevertheless, Attaleiates' construction of the idea of Nikephoros III as an ideal ruler is problematic. To this day the encomium has been treated as honest. I have proposed elsewhere that there are reasons to be suspicious of such an analysis. I will thus refrain from using Botaneiates as evidence of Attaleiates' ideas regarding imperial rule.[55]

The most central point of contact between Psellos and Attaleiates is their treatment of causation. Already from the introduction to his text, the latter notes:

> And I compiled a book out of those actions that took place in our times in wars and battles and in victories and defeats or mishaps, adding the causes of what happened as well, wherever that was possible (*Hist.* 5).

The reason for Attaleiates' interest in causation can be sought in his understanding of the uses of history. Attaleiates knew that τὸ τῆς ἱστορίας χρῆμα πολλοῖς τῶν πάλαι σοφῶν σπουδασθὲν οὐ παρέργως

[54] Attaleiates, *Hist.*: Accounts of Romanos' victory [113–4], then failure to take advantage of it [114]. Accounts of Romanos' agreement with Attaleiates' ideas [131] and then lack of willingness to follow the advice [132].

[55] Krallis (2004). In this venue I argued for the need to disconnect the *Historia* from the encomium when it comes to seeking the "ideal" ruler. This does not mean that the two parts of Attaleiates' *Historia* do not work together. There are, however, compelling reasons for not treating Botaneiates as the end, literal and metaphorical, of Attaleiates' narrative.

(*Hist.* 7). These old men devoted to history studied how people achieved victory or how, using their opportunities μὴ συνετῶς, failed to succeed. Such a πραγματικὴ ἱστορία is in Polybian terms a διδασκαλία σαφῆς.[56] Causation is used to expose the true reasons behind historical developments so as to instruct future generations. For Attaleiates this has been the central occupation of wise men: prudent people [συνετοὶ] who can advise on the proper course of action. The ability to plan the future assumes a central part in Psellos' narrative as well. The rebel Bardas Phokas was ἐγρηγορὼς, καὶ πάντα προϊδεῖν καὶ συνιδεῖν (*Chron.* 1.7). As for Michael IV, he is extolled by his brother John Orphanotrophos to take measures to guarantee his family's control on the throne for τὸν δὲ τοῦ μὴ προϊδεῖν τὸ μέλλον οὐκ ἐκφεύξεται ἔλεγχον (*Chron.* 4.21). To be able to plan for the future one needs to understand the causes of things and the man best equipped to do that is

> The philosopher who [does not believe] in the chance nature of an event but attempts to explain it on the basis of rational causes (*Chron.* 5.24).

Psellos' discussion of the importance of the study of causation comes to a narrative climax with his discussion of the so-called prophetic powers of Constantine IX Monomachos. At this point he digresses on the different types of men, concluding with those who face disasters with a calm derived from the solid nature of their thinking and their superior critical ability. These men, Psellos notes, did not seem to exist in his times, yet we know that there was at least one he had in mind, himself.[57] We have thus seen that the *Chronographia* and the *Historia* share common attitudes and even enter into a form of dialogue as the younger of the two authors, Attaleiates, seeks to establish an intellectual and even textual link with his predecessor.

For all the emphasis on dialogue and disagreement, I wish to close with a final reference to the common ground between the two authors. Scholars are aware of the ambivalent nature of Psellos' accounts of the reigns of the Doukai emperors.[58] Behind the façade of *enkomion* lies an undercurrent of tough criticism. The last part of the *Chronographia*

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[56] Polybius, *Hist.* 2.56.11: on the educative function of history 23.14.12: on history as an account of actions that stand as models for emulation.

[57] *Chron.* 6.96–7; Kaldellis (1999) 34.

[58] *Chronographia*, ed. V. Karales (Athens, 2004) v. II, 480–483.

is an apology for Psellos' role in the events of Romanos IV Diogenes' reign and an encomium of the Doukai may appear as an effective format for exactly that, yet it is not honest encomium that we are dealing with. Psellos praises Michael VII for exactly the kind of behavior that had incurred his criticism when other emperors were discussed.[59] I would argue, (though this is material for a different paper,) that in the structure of his encomiastic books Psellos provides a model for Attaleiates' account of the reign of Botaneiates. Attaleiates too seems to praise Botaneiates for policies that he condemns in the reigns of previous emperors and uses the same kind of irony.[60] Thus when Psellos praises Doukas for being an expert in the minting of gold coinage, there is a sense of irony in that Michael's was the first reign characterized by the dramatic debasement of the coinage. Likewise when Attaleiates compares Nikephoros III Botaneiates to the gold-bearing rivers Paktolos and Khrysoroas, it is also good to know that he had presided over an even more dramatic dilution of the purity of the *nomisma* as well as the actual loss to the Turks of the areas of Asia Minor containing the two rivers in question.[61] Moreover, on a purely biographical level it appears that even in this latter period when one expects to see the two men in opposing political camps, they nevertheless seem to share at least one enemy, namely the logothete Nikephoritzes who was a threat to Psellos' position at court and a menace to Attaleiates' economic interests.

We have followed the various points of contact between the texts of Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates. In their narratives, agreement and disjunction go hand-in-hand as methodological considerations intersect with political concerns and create an intricate web where the history of personal relationships and intellectual concerns lies tangled waiting for the historian. In our days the two historians have been pigeonholed in analytical categories defined by the concerns of modern scholarship. Psellos and Attaleiates have been read as men with different world-views yet not as men who agree or disagree. The notion itself of a world-view subordinates complex works, like the *Chronographia* and the *Historia*, expressing a variety of

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[59] Compare *Chron.* 7c.2 with *Chron.* 6.136 [on Monomakhos failing to protect himself], 6.170 [on Monomakhos acquitting the embezzler of army funds].

[60] Cresci (1991) 197–218. Cresci sees a much more serious commitment of Attaleiates to the encomium of Botaneiates than I am willing to concede.

[61] Morrisson (1976) 9–12 for the reigns of Michael VII and Nikephoros III.

opinions and ad hoc reactions to evolving events and ever-changing personal relationships, to the straightjacket of totalizing modern narratives. The reactions of one to the writings or teachings of the other have not yet concerned scholarship. The notion of a history of courtly reading circles in a period of cataclysmic political and military developments may appear to be an academic luxury, yet, the campaigns having been exhaustively discussed and the prosopography of the eleventh century also being at a decent stage of development, such a discussion may be what we need if the period is to acquire a life of its own. Psellos, with his personal style and vivid textual presence, and Attaleiates with his emphasis on detail, reminiscent of an unforgiving meticulous judge, are ideal associates in this project. Communication between their texts is real and the untangling of their strains of narrative and argument may actually help us acquire a better sense of the way political dialogue developed not only within the pages of books but also in the θέατρα and by extension in the corridors of power.

MICHAEL PSELLOS' *DE DAEMONIBUS* IN THE RENAISSANCE

Darin Hayton

In 1555 Pierre de Ronsard composed his *Hymne des Daimons*, which he dedicated to Lancelot Carle, Bishop of Riez. Claiming that Carle wished to comprehend the entire universe and its mysteries, Ronsard lets his "muse explore a narrow path that was not marked by the French in previous centuries (as it is so unknown), in order to be elevated to the amazing mysteries of Demons, to make a valuable present of them."[1] Ronsard draws on a wide range of classical authors and Church Fathers and offers a catalogue of contemporary views on the origins, faculties and actions of demons. Alongside Homer, Plato, Virgil, and St. Augustine stands Michael Psellos. In fact, after Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, Psellos' *De daemonibus* is Ronsard's most frequently used source.[2] That Ronsard, the founder of and principle figure amongst the *Pléiade* poets and perhaps the most famous sixteenth-century French poet, relied so heavily on Psellos suggests the importance and fame that both Psellos and his *De daemonibus* enjoyed in Renaissance Europe.[3]

Ronsard opens by locating demons within the world. He adopts a traditional Aristotelian division of super- and sublunary regions, in which the superlunary realm was filled with perfect spheres in circular motion and inhabited by angels. By contrast, the sublunary realm was a place of corruption, generation, and decay, and was appropriately the place of demons. The air was replete with demons

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[1] "Ma Muse extravaguer par une estroitte voye
Laquelle des François aux vieux temps ne fut pas,
(Tant elle est incogneue) empreinte de leurs pas,
Afin d'estre promeue au mystere admirable
Des Daimons, pour t'en faire un present venerable:"
Ronsard, *Hymne des Daimons* lines 8–12.

[2] This essay is not concerned with the modern question about the authenticity of the *De daemonibus*. Interested readers can find the relevant arguments against it in Gautier (1980) and Gautier (1988). More recently, Cortesi and Maltese have argued against Gautier: Cortesi and Maltese (1992) and Maltese (1995).

[3] The best account of the *Pléiade* poets remains Yates (1948).

whose rude natures prevented them from straying "too high toward the heavens, abandoning the place assigned to them by God's will."[4] As Ronsard's early seventeenth-century commentator pointed out, for the reader who might miss the allusion, this division precisely echoed that made by Psellos in his *De daemonibus*. Ronsard extended his debt to Psellos when he discussed demons' physical nature and their ability to assume different forms: demons, whose bodies are subtle, lithe, and supple can adopt almost any shape they please, swelling to enormous size and then shrinking into tiny little balls. At the same time, they can appear as snakes or dragons or birds.[5] Demons, however, never adopt any particular form for very long, vanishing away into nothing just as quickly as they appeared.[6] Psellos had said much the same, claiming that their subtle and ductile bodies allowed them to adopt the shapes of men, women, or dragons.[7] Although, Ronsard could have found some of this in other tracts on demonology, the echoes of Psellos' text suggest his debt to the Byzantine polymath.

The physiology of Ronsard's demons resembles closely that found in Psellos' text. Demons have no need of words and do not speak, for they communicate to humans and to each other directly through the imagination.[8] Although immortal and largely immaterial, like humans they have sensations and suffer not only from cold but also from emotions such as fear. Knives and swords frighten demons, who flee such weapons. They have little fear of actual injury, for their bodies heal instantly when cut, just as air and water seem to restore themselves instantly upon being cut. Instead, they fear the sensation of having their limbs and bodies severed.[9] In their search for warmth, the baser demons, who live deep within the earth, often come to the surface and possess pigs, dogs or wolves.[10] In his *De daemonibus* Psellos used similar terms and examples to describe demons.[11]

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[4] "Trop haut jusques au ciel, aboandonnant le lieu
Qui leur est destiné par le vouloir de Dieu."
Ronsard, *Hymne des Daimons* lines 37–38.

[5] Ibid. lines 48–63.

[6] Ibid. lines 103–108.

[7] *De daemonibus* 1942.

[8] Ronsard, *Hymne des Daimons* lines 81–85.

[9] Ibid. lines 261–270.

[10] Ibid. lines 233–239.

[11] On demons' desire for warmth and their preference for pigs, see *De daemonibus* 1941.

When Ronsard composed his *Hymne des Daimons* he might have found summaries and excerpts from Psellos' text in a few other authors. By the early 1520s Juan Luis Vives had used Psellos' text in compiling his commentary on Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa cited the *De daemonibus* in his *De occulta philosophia libri tres*, which appeared in 1533. Ronsard was, however, deeply imbued with Neoplatonism and most likely had a copy of Ficino's *Opera omnia* that contained a translation of this text.

In 1615, when Nicholas Richelet produced his commentary on the *Hymne des Daimons*, he seemed to rely on the Greek edition that had recently appeared in Paris bookshops. In remarkable detail, Richelet worked through Ronsard's poem, indicating the source of nearly every line of the poem and drawing attention to where Ronsard differed from his sources. When Ronsard claimed that demons can quickly "now swell hugely into a barrel, now shrink roundly into a ball," Richelet was quick to point out that "Psellos says clearly that they contract and extend as they please, but he says neither barrel nor ball."[12] Similarly, he indicates where Ronsard has reworked Psellos' ideas to make them more eloquent.[13] Richelet finds nearly a third of Ronsard's poem in Psellos' text. In each case he quotes the initial few words of the Greek text and indicates how faithful Ronsard remained to the original, revealing just how closely Ronsard had followed the Greek polymath. This intimate relationship between Ronsard's *Hymne des Daimons* and Psellos' *De daemonibus* was not lost on at least one early seventeenth-century reader who bound the Greek edition of Psellos' *De daemonibus* with Richelet's commentary.[14]

Ronsard's reliance on Psellos' authority regarding demons was not unique. In 1609 Ben Jonson drew on Psellos' social and intellectual capital in his *The Masque of Queenes*, performed before King James I,

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[12] "Ores en un tonneau grossement s'eslargissent,
Or' en un peloton rondement s'entressissent,"
Ronsard, *Hymne des Daimons* 96–97.
Richelet's commentary: "Psellus dit bien qu'ils s'estraicissent & allongent comme il leur plaist, mais il ne dit pas en tonneau ny en peoloton." Richelet (1618) 24–25.

[13] "*En craignant devient blesme*] Mais ce n'est pas de volonté, & en cela il semble que l'action & la volonté du Daimon est mal comparee à un mouuement qui n'est point en nostre puissance & volonté, mais qui nous surprend malgré nous. *Vt inuitis nobis rubor ad improba verba suffunditur*, Senec, 2. *de ira.* ch. s. Toutesfois ceste coparaison est de Psellus, mais plus elegante en nostre Auteur." Ibid. 28–29.

[14] See Bodleian Douce P 422.

Queen Anne of England, and their entire court. Jonson was no dilettante who accidentally chose Psellos for his masque. Indeed, as he pointed out in his description of the *Masque of Queenes*, "I precrib'd them [the hags] their *properties* of vipers, snakes, bones, herbs, rootes, and other ensignes of their *magick*, out of the authoritie of ancient and late *writers*."[15] In a parody of the twelve pious queens that attended King James, Jonson staged a witches' sabbath in which twelve hags try to overturn the natural order and unleash chaos into the kingdom. Each hag represented a particular crime associated with witches. Although Jonson relied on Psellos in describing the hag who desecrated the corpse of a condemned murderer, he did not initially indicate his debt:

> A Murderer, yonder, was hung in chaines,
> The Sunne and the wind had shrunke his veines;
> I bit off a sinew, I clipp'd his haire,
> I brought off his ragges, that danc'd i'the ayre.

Shortly after the masque was performed, Prince Henry requested an annotated copy, prompting Jonson "to retrive the particular *authorities* (acording to yo^{r} gracious command, and a desire borne out of iudgment) to those things, w^{c}h I writt ovt of fullnesse, and memory of my former readings."[16] His authorities for portraying this hag were Porphyry and Psellos: "The abuse of dead bodies in their witchcraft, both *Porphyrio* and *Psellus* are graue Authors of. The one *lib. de sacris. cap. de vero cultu.* The other *lib. de dæmo.* which *Apuleius* toucheth too."[17] Jonson's assertion that he found this doctrine in Psellos' *De daemonibus* reflects a liberal interpretation of the text—for Psellos says nothing overtly about witches or their habits. At first glance Jonson's vague reference to Psellos does not seem particularly significant. However, it probably would have resonated with King James I, who as King James VI of Scotland had recently published his *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue, diuided into three bookes*, and it reveals the way that Psellos' *De daemonibus* had become part of the demonological furniture that decorated early Stuart England.[18]

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[15] Jonson (1616) 946.
[16] Quoted in Furniss (1954) 345.
[17] Jonson (1616) 951.
[18] James does not refer explicitly to Psellos or his *De daemonibus* in his text, though many of the doctrines he espouses are consonant with Psellos'. See James VI (1597). James's book was reprinted three times in 1603.

Almost two centuries after Ficino's translation appeared John Milton drew on Psellos' *De daemonibus* when he wrote *Paradise Lost*.[19] In two important passages, Milton borrows directly from Psellos' text. Early in the first book, Milton claims that because of their simple substance, demons can assume either sex and any shape they like. Further, they can expand and contract at will and appear bright or dark.[20] Later in the poem, when Satan is struck by Michael, his wounds heal almost immediately despite his immense anguish and pain:

> The griding sword with discontinuous wound
> Pass'd through him, but th' Ethereal substance clos'd
> Not long divisible, and from the gash
> A stream of Nectarous humor issuing flow'd
> Sanguin, such as Celestial Spirits may bleed,
> . . .
> Gnashing for anguish and despite and shame
> To find himself not matchless, and his pride
> Humbl'd by such rebuke, so farr beneath
> His confidence to equal God in power.
> Yet soon he heal'd; for Spirits that live throughout
> Vital in every part, not as frail man
> In Entrailes, Heart or Head, Liver or Reines,
> Cannot but by annihilating die;
> Nor in thir liquid texture mortal wound
> Receive, no more then can the fluid Aire:
> All Heart they live, all Head, all Eye, all Eare,
> All Intellect, all Sense, and as they please,
> They Limb themselves, and colour, shape or size
> Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.[21]

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[19] Milton's debt to Psellos was recognized in the 18th century, and scholars have repeatedly pointed to it in passing. More recently, Robert H. West studied it rather closely. His article forms the basis for the following treatment. See West (1949) 477–89.

[20] "These Feminine. For Spirits when they please
Can either Sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their Essence pure,
Not ti'd or manacl'd with joynt or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose
Dilated or condens't, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aerie purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfill."
John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I, 423–431.

[21] Ibid. Book VI, 326–350.

Like his predecessors, Milton accepts that demons suffer pain when their bodies are cut, but because of their vital substance, they heal instantly. Psellos makes the same point in the closing lines of his *De daemonibus*, where he discusses at some length how demons' bodies heal themselves immediately after being cut or wounded.[22] This is the core set of characteristics that Psellos seems to have made popular in his *De daemonibus*.

Together, Ronsard, Jonson and Milton reflect the most common approach adopted by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors when they turned to Psellos' *De daemonibus*. Psellos along with his learned informant Marcus were authorities on the physical characteristics and physiology of demons. The *De daemonibus* had demarcated a sphere of influence for demons, delineated their orders, and had indicated their fears. That Psellos provided such a fertile resource for knowledge of demons reflects not simply the idiosyncrasies of literature, but rather the Byzantine polymath's place in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century intellectual landscape. Psellos owed much of his fame to Marsilio Ficino's translation of the *De daemonibus*, which appeared in Ficino's *Opera omnia* in 1497 alongside a number of other Neoplatonic texts—including, Proclus, Iamblichus, and Dionysios. Ficino's edition was largely responsible for introducing Psellos' work to Renaissance Europe and remained an important resource throughout the next two centuries. Indeed, Ficino's translation was reprinted at least four times in the sixteenth century and had virtually no competition until 1573, despite an Italian translation that appeared in 1545.[23]

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[22] "Sed profecto in iis, quae sentiunt, non neruus ipse est, qui sentit, sed qui eis spiritus inest. Quapropter si atteratur neruus, si frigesiat, si quid aliter patiatur, spiritu videlicet in spiritum misso, sit dolor. Nempe compositum nunquam per se doloret, sed quando participat spiritum, quo quidem priuatum priuatur & sensu. Daemonicum itaque corpus per totum se naturaliter sensuale secundum partes singulas absque medio videt, audit, tangit, patiturque; tangendo, & divisum dolet, sicut & corpora solida. Sed hoc interest, quod corpora quidem solida, diuisa cum sunt, aut vix, aut nunquam restituunter, corpus vero daemonum, ubi secatur, mox in se iterum recreatur, & coalescit, sicut aquae, aêrisque; partes, quando aliquid intercidit solidum, sed & dictu velocius daemonicus spiritus in se reuertitur. Dolet tamen interea, dum diuiditur, quamobrem aciem ferri metuit, idque; animaduertentes, qui fugare daemones moliuntur, tela, & enses in rectum ibi constituunt, quo nolunt daemones aduentare, atque; alia machinantur tum oppositits passionibus propulsantes, tum congrua quadam affectione mulcentes." *De daemonibus* 1945.

[23] For a brief account of different editions of Psellos' text, see Svoboda (1927) and more recently, Gautier (1980).

In the 1570s, during the violent Wars of Religion in France, two new editions based on a significantly different manuscript were published in Paris. The third civil war had just ended in 1570 with the Peace of St. Germain, but religious tensions had not abated. As Huguenots increasingly rejected the sacral monarchy and attempted to establish their own spheres of authority within France, Catholic fears and anxieties continued to mount and finally erupted in the St. Bartholomew's Day massacres in August 1572. These events signaled the beginning of the fourth civil war that would plague the country for the next few years. In this context, Catholics, who were eager to use any resource to fight heresy and restore religious and political unity to France, turned to Psellos' *De daemonibus*.[24]

In the early 1570s Pierre Moreau discovered a manuscript in the library of Saint Andrea's Church in Paris that contained an alternate version of Psellos' text from the one in Ficino's *Opera omnia*.[25] He quickly produced a French translation of this new version and published it in 1573.[26] For Moreau, Psellos' text was fundamentally a weapon to combat heresy, especially the dangerous heresies then common in France. He made this point explicit on the title page when he said that Psellos' work was published "along with chapters thirty-three and thirty-six of the fourth book of the *Tresor de la foy Catholique* by the venerable Necetas of Colosses in Asia, from which the principal tenets of the Heretics, the Manicheans, the Euchites, or the Enthusiasts are drawn and refuted."[27] In his preface, Moreau vilified the enthusiasts for their "commerce and relations with Demons . . . and idolatry of the bodies of Demons and finally also their fantasies and conjurings by which they seduce the miserable poor."[28] For the Catholic Moreau, all reformed religious worship was heretical. He accused Luther of seeing demons and spirits. He claimed

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[24] This seems to confirm Maltese's argument that Psellos' *De daemonibus* was a tool for the Catholic Reformation. See Maltese (1995).

[25] *Dialogus de energia, seu operatione daemonum* a_{ii}^{r}.

[26] *Traicté par dialogue de l'énergie ou opération des diables*.

[27] "Avec les chapitres xxxiij & xxxvj du quatriesme livre du Treso de la foy Catholique, du venerable Necetas de Colosses en Asie, desquels sont deduicts & confutez les principaux articles des Heretique, Manicheens, Euchites, ou Enthusiastes." Ibid. t.p.

[28] "commerce, & convenance, ave les Demons . . . & idolatrie des corps des Demons, & finallement aussi de leurs phantosme, & operations par lesquelles ils seduisent les pauures miserables." Ibid. a_{ij}^{v}.

that Zwingli, who was influential in Switzerland, had secret nighttime conversations with spirits that perverted and overturned the natural meaning of Christ's teachings. He branded both moderate and radical reformers heretics, equating their doctrines to those of the Euchites.[29] Had these perversions been isolated foreign matters, Moreau might have been content to ignore them. However, the Huguenots threatened the peace and social order within France itself. Moreau equated the Huguenots to witches and applied to them the same heretical connotations about consorting with Satan, conjuring demons, bewitching neighbors, and disrupting the natural order.[30] Psellos' *De daemonibus* was, according to Moreau, useful in helping true Catholics recognize the action of demons in the world and to distinguish true miracles from the apparitions offered by demons and Satan.

Three years later, just as the next civil war was about to break out, Moreau was more concerned than ever about the spread of heresy. In late 1576 he was granted the privilege to print a Latin translation of his French edition. The Latin version included a new dedicatory letter and an expanded preface but was otherwise identical to the 1573 text. In the letter Moreau laments the spread of Gnostic heresy, which now grips all of Europe and threatens to destroy the true meaning of the Scriptures.[31] Once again he vilified Luther, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and Karlstadt and then praised Francis I, for combating first the Albigensian and then the Waldensian heresies. Moreau wished for another king like Francis I to fight the Lutherans and the Calvinists who now lived within the borders of France.

Moreau added little to his earlier argument against heresies. Indeed, his Latin preface largely recapitulates the French edition. As before, he stressed that he had been moved to publish this text because Ficino's text lacked the opening six chapters, those very chapters that were the most useful for combating heresy in France.[32] Then, perhaps fearing that his audience would not bother to read the entire

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[29] Ibid. $e_{iij}{}^{v}$.

[30] Ibid. $e_{ii}{}^{r}$–$e_{iij}{}^{v}$.

For a lucid discussion of witchcraft in this period, see Clarke (1997). A more social history approach is Briggs (1996).

[31] *Dialogus de energia, seu operatione daemonum* $a_{i}{}^{v}$.

[32] Ibid. $a_{iii}{}^{r}$.

text, Moreau summarized Psellos' dialogue. He rehearsed the standard opinions about the corporality of demons and their ability to assume various shapes: "In the first place, demons appear to have bodies and to assume various forms and shapes."[33] He then examined the questions about whether or not demons are male or female, confirmed demons' natural fear of swords and fire, and concluded with the Psellosian taxonomy of demons.[34] Both of Moreau's translations found attentive readers in late sixteenth-century France.[35] The Latin translation, however, enjoyed a much wider circulation, for it was reprinted thirty years later as the facing page translation to the Greek edition.[36]

In 1615, when Gilbert Gaulmine published the first Greek edition of Psellos' *De daemonibus*, the religious situation in France had changed dramatically. The Edict of Nantes in 1598 had established the guidelines for integrating the substantial Huguenot minority into the Catholic state. The edict shied away from mandating beliefs and focused instead on healing the rifts in the body politic and reestablishing a modicum of peace in the country. Although religious tensions continued, they had been displaced from the violence of open warfare to theological debates. Gaulmine mentions only briefly in his letter to the reader that Psellos' text is a tool for combating the Eustathium heresy.[37] Absent is the venomous condemnation of reformed theologians, each responsible for some species of heresy, that had motivated Moreau. Instead, Gaulmine placed Psellos' work into a tradition of poets and philosophers who debated whether or not demons had their origins in God, and whether or not they were mortal.[38] These questions had remained unresolved until Psellos had written his elegant little book on the matter.[39] In other words, Gaulmine was more concerned with Psellos' *De daemonibus* as part of a larger humanist project to construct a Neoplatonic prosopography of writings on demons than he was with the heretical and religious questions.

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[33] Ibid. e_{ii}^{r}: "corpora in primis habere, variásque formas & figuras assumere . . . appareat".

[34] Ibid. e_{iii}^{r}–e_{vi}^{r}.

[35] For example, two copies in the Bodleian Library are extensively annotated. In both cases, the first six chapters contain the densest underlining and marginalia. See *Traicté*, Bodleian Douce P 430, and *Dialogus de energia*, Bodleian Byw. R.9.23.

[36] The Greek edition was reprinted in 1688, largely unchanged.

[37] *Peri energeias daimonon dialogos* "Typographys lectori", n.p.

[38] Ibid. a_{ij}^{r}–a_{iij}^{v}.

[39] Ibid. a_{iij}^{v}–a_{v}^{r}.

Gaulmine's humanist motivations find their greatest expression in the commentary he appended to the text. In a careful and erudite exegetical exercise, Gaulmine dissected the text to reveal its debts to Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, and Latin astrology, demonology, and magic. Along with the more common sources, Homer, Porphyry, and Plato, Gaulmine displayed his humanist and linguistic skills by quoting Hebrew and Arabic works that complemented Psellos' doctrines and by suggesting emendations to Moreau's reading of the Greek manuscripts.[40] To these classical sources, Gaulmine added Church Fathers such as Gregory of Nazianzos as well as Hermes Trismegistus, Zoroaster, and occasionally later, sixteenth-century authors such as Horapollo. In his treatment, Psellos has become a source for a Christianized demonology.

Gaulmine was the not the first humanist to use Psellos' work to understand theological questions. The famous Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives cited Psellos in his commentary on St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei.* Vives had come to London to tutor Princess Mary, King Henry VIII's daughter. Once there, Vives was finally able to complete his extensive commentary on Augustine's work. With typical erudition, he ranged widely across classical and contemporary sources adding pithy comments and explanations to every chapter of the text. In the dedicatory epistle Vives stated clearly that he considered his commentary useful for understanding Augustine's distinctions between angels, devils, and humans:

> Now the worke is not concerning the children of Niobe, or the gates of Thebes, or mending cloathes, or preparing pleasures, or manuring grounds, which yet have beene arguments presented even to Kings: but concerning both Citties, of the World, and GOD, wherein Angells, devills, and all men are contained, how they were borne, how bred, how growne, whether they tend, and what they shall doe when the come to their worke: to which unfold, hee hath omitted not prophane nor sacred learning, which hee doth not both touch and explane; as the exploites of the Romanes, their gods, and ceremonies, the Philosophers opinions, the originall of heaven and earth, of Angells, devills, and men.[41]

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[40] Gaulmine's commentary runs nearly fifty pages and is longer than either the Latin or the Greek text alone.

[41] Vives (1610) A_1^r.

Although he considered Psellos' text too tedious to quote at length, Vives selected out of it those aspects that supported his argument. He added Psellos' six orders of demons to his commentary on book 10, chapter 9, where Augustine treats the worship of devils and distinguishes between devils and angels.[42] Vives also relied on Psellos for much of his knowledge of the physiology of demons: demons "cast forth sperme, producing diverse little creatures, and that they have genitories (but not like mens [sic]) from which the excrement passeth," they require nourishment, and by assuming either sex they fornicate with women and men.[43] Vives's commentary reveals how early Psellos' *De daemonibus* provided a core set of doctrines about demons, doctrines that became standard by the middle of the sixteenth century and would remain central to the discussion of demons well into the late seventeenth century. Indeed, the demand for Vives's commentary itself had hardly abated a century later, when it was translated into English and printed in London, extending Psellos' reputation as an authority on demons.

Protestant theologians and biblical commentators found Psellos' doctrines as useful as their Catholic rivals. In 1577 Girolamo Zanchi published his learned commentary on Genesis, *De operibus Dei intra spacium sex dierum creatis*, in which he devoted an entire book to examining the various writings on demons and evil angels.[44] Two chapters in his fourth book, "De malis angelis," leaned heavily on Psellos' *De daemonibus*. Chapter seventeen treats the distinctions between types of demons. Zanchi presented Psellos' six divisions, claimed that Psellos represented the opinions of innumerable Christians, but finally rejected that hierarchy. Instead, he claimed that there were nine orders of demons, arranged largely according to their relationship to the sins they could commit.[45] He also surveyed Psellos' doctrine on whether or not demons suffer from pain or fear swords and other mundane weapons, a doctrine he again rejected. For demons to feel pain and fear weapons, they must possess solid bodies.[46] Zanchi was unwilling to accept this assumption. Instead, he claimed that demons were incorporeal and were therefore immune to pain and physical suffering.[47]

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[42] Ibid. 372.
[43] Ibid. 563–4.
[44] A good introduction to Zanchi is Burchill (1984).
[45] Zanchius (1619) 206–7. All citations are from this edition.
[46] Ibid. 208–9.
[47] Ibid. 209.

Although Zanchi ultimately found little of value in Psellos' *De daemonibus*, by quoting from it and presenting detailed summaries of Psellos' ideas he inadvertently disseminated it through a much wider audience.

Psellos found an enthusiastic audience amongst writers on witchcraft and magic. As early as 1509 or 1510, when Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa was writing his *De occulta philosophica libri tres*, he was already familiar with Psellos' doctrines and expounded them in his work. "But Psellos, a Platonist and Christian, does not believe that the nature of demons is incorporeal, but rather that angels and demons are corporeal." Continuing to draw on Psellos, Agrippa then claimed that demons also suffer from passions and can be struck and burnt and thus fear swords, spears, and fire.[48] Later in the same chapter, he repeats the common-place belief that demonic bodies are lithe and supple, allowing them to adopt different shapes and sizes.[49] Agrippa's use of Psellos was rather conservative. Later authors on magic often attributed to Psellos' *De daemonibus* doctrines that seem rather distant from those Psellos discussed. At one extreme, Thomas Browne referred to the *De daemonibus* in his arguments against magical amulets and charms.[50] By contrast, John Cotta claimed on Psellos' authority that gems and jewels are powerful tools in conjuring demons and practicing divination. He does not grant magical powers to the gems themselves; rather, their efficacy stems from their ability to attract demons and spirits.[51] Claiming that astrology cannot be practiced without recourse to magic and spiritual forces, George Carleton looked to Psellos for support in his struggle against astrology, or at least that astrology practiced by Christopher Heydon.[52] Lambert Daneau, in his short pamphlet on sorcery, condemned Psellos for having learnt too much about demons.[53] In an odd reference to the diabolical perfume, a fumigant useful in driving away devils, Michel Marescot claimed that both Psellos and Porphyry confirmed that

[48] "Verum Psellus Platonicus & Christianus, daemonum naturam non putat esse sine corpore: non idem tamen angelicum & daemonum corpus." Agrippa (1533) 257.
[49] Ibid. 258.
[50] Browne (1646) 92.
[51] Cotta (1616) 95.
[52] Carleton (1624) 90.
[53] Daneau (1575) 6^{r}.

"such *Parfumes* are the *Devils dainties*."[54] Not all references to Psellos' *De daemonibus* took such liberties with the text. Sebastian Michaelis rehearsed Psellos' claims about the corporeality of demons and their fear of being cut.[55] Reginald Scot and Johann Weyer both presented sober if critical assessments of Psellos's text—they engaged with Psellos' opinions rather than just recite them. In both cases, however, the authors rejected most of Psellos' doctrines.

In 1584 Scot, appended his *Discourse upon divels and spirits* to his popular *Discovery of Witchcraft*. In the *Discourse* he devoted two chapters to examining and refuting Psellos' opinions. He carefully recounts Psellos' taxonomy of demons, their locations, and affects on humans:

> *Subterranei* and *Lucifugi* enter into the bowels of men, and torment them that they possesse with the phrensie, and the falling evill. They also assault them that are miners or pioners, which use to worke in deepe and darke holes under the earth. Such divels as are earthy and aiery, he saith enter by subtilty into the minds of men, to deceive them, provoking men to absurd and unlawfull affections.[56]

Scot denied the possibility of earthy demons possessing humans for, "if the divell be earthy, he must needs be palpable; if he be palpable, he must needs kill them into whose bodies he entereth."[57] Moreover, Scot claimed, given the nature of earth, terrestrial demons must always be visible in a relatively fixed form. By contrast, aerial, watery, and fiery demons can never assume a rigid shape.[58] In the next chapter, Scot rejects Psellos' claims about how demons possess cattle, how they communicate, and whether or not they can know humans' thoughts.[59] Scot's motivation for rejecting both demons and Psellos' doctrines arose from his virulent rejection of Catholicism. When he first cited Psellos, he denigrates Psellos as being an "authority in the Church of Rome and not impugnable by any catholike" and labels him a papist.[60] Scot denied all spiritual and preternatural activity in the world, which he considered nothing more than tricks and Catholic superstition intended to control the ignorant masses.

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[54] Marescot (1599) 34.
[55] Michaelis (1613) 27.
[56] Scot (1651) 355. All citations are from this edition.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid. 355–6.
[59] Ibid. 356–7.
[60] Ibid. 355.

Johann Weyer, famous for rejecting witchcraft, clearly considered both Psellos and Marcus the Hermit, Psellos' informant, important authorities, but like Scot denied the validity of their conclusions. In the list of authors cited in his work, Weyer lists both "Marcus heremita" and "Psellus".[61] Although Weyer regretted not being able to explain everything that Psellos, Proclus, Porphyry and others had written, he nonetheless cites Psellos for the core demonological doctrines.[62] In chapter fourteen of the first book, entitled "How and by what ingenious changes of his substance the Devil accomplishes such things, according to Psellos" Weyer rehearsed Psellos' description of demons' bodies, their abilities to assume different shapes and sizes, and to communicate without speaking.[63] Further, he repeated Psellos' account of how demons could directly affect the human mind, thereby exciting certain passions and thoughts, inducing sleep, or appearing as women or men.[64] Weyer again drew on Psellos in his discussion of whether or not demons were good or evil. In fact, Weyer silently quoted Girolamo Cardano's characterization of Psellos: "Philosophers, who believe that demons exist, divide them into three sorts. Some think that they are immortal and universally evil and feeble, as Psellos who since he is a Christian reflects the Christian opinions."[65] In the end, Weyer rejected Psellos' opinion on the types of demons and accepted instead a simple distinction between good angels and evil demons.[66] Like Scot, Weyer was at least in part motivated by his anti-Catholic sentiment. Much of the belief in demons, Weyer believed, was promulgated by the Catholic Church's superstitious ceremonies. As court physician to the irenic Lutheran Duke William V of Cleves-Mark-Jülich-Berg, Weyer hoped to find a more natural and therefore religiously neutral explanation for the extraordinary phenomena that the Church had appropriated.[67] He granted the existence of

[61] Wierus (1577) b_4^r, b_4^v. Weyer's book was first published in 1563 and subsequently expanded until the last edition in 1583.

[62] Ibid. 17.

[63] Ibid. 67–70.

[64] Ibid. 69.

[65] "Philosophi, qui daemones esse crediderunt, trifariam eos diuiserunt. Alij immortales, & omnes malos esse putant, ac imbecilles, ut Psellus: qui cum esset Christianus, Christianorum sententie subscripsit." Ibid. 121.

[66] Ibid. 123–4.

[67] For a interesting discussion on Weyer's irenic attitude and how it affected his attempts to explain witchcraft, see Waite (2003) 128–34.

demons, but greatly circumscribed their sphere of influence, preferring medical and humoral theories to account for the cases of apparent demonic possession and witchcraft. Weyer's thoughtful rejection of Psellosian doctrine contrasts with other attempts to integrate demons into the natural world. Both Girolamo Cardano and Robert Burton examined closely Psellos' *De daemonibus* in order to incorporate demons into their larger understanding of the social and natural world.

The most extensive summary of Psellos' *De daemonibus* occurs in Cardano's *De rerum varietate*, first published in 1557.[68] For Cardano, Psellos provided a source for understanding demons and their effects on humans. Indeed, Cardano hoped to separate the actions and illusions caused by demons from those phantasms and fevers that could be attributed to natural or material causes, and he devoted an entire chapter to this problem.[69] He admitted that demons posed a particular challenge, for it was difficult to distinguish between the effects arising from natural causes—such as astrology, humoral imbalances, or human artifice—and those caused by demons.[70] Nonetheless, Cardano remained committed to the existence of demons and their actions on humans.

He opened his chapter "On Demons and Mortals" by dismissing the absence of demons in classical sources, in particular Plato and Aristotle. Cardano cited little support for his belief in demons until he arrived at Psellos, who is the first person he mentioned by name:

> But those who believed that demons exist are divided into three sorts. Some think that demons are immortal and universally evil and feeble, just as Psellos, who being a Christian, represents the opinions of Christians, adhered not only to experience. Others that demons are mortal, some good and some evil and powerful. . . . The third opinion is that of the Platonists, who thinking that they are immortal and familiar to us, affirm that some are good and some evil.[71]

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[68] Recent work on Cardano has contributed greatly to our understanding of his place in sixteenth-century medicine and astrology. See Siraisi (1997), and Grafton (1999).

[69] Cardano (1557). The edition used for this essay was: Cardano (1663).

[70] Ibid. 318.

[71] "Qui vero daemones esse crediderunt, trifariam divisi sunt. Alij enim immortales, & omnes malos esse putant ac imbeilles, ut Psellus: qui cum esset Christianus, Christianorum opinioni, necnon experimentis multum adhaeret. Alij mortaes, aliosque bonos, alios malos, potentes, . . . Tertia est Platonicorum, qui eos immortales potentesque ac nobis familiares, partimque bonos, partim malos esse affirmant." Ibid. 319.

In minute detail Cardano then recounted every aspect of Psellos' arguments on the nature and actions of demons, rearranging them to suit his own presentation. Indeed, Cardano's summary of Psellos' "little book on demons" is nearly half as long as the original and dwarfs his summary of the other two positions. Often just repeating Psellos, Cardano spent the remainder of the chapter recounting various characteristics of demons and stories of their preternatural abilities. In the end, however, he admitted that humans will ultimately remain largely ignorant of the more subtle characteristics of demons. Do not be surprised, he tells his reader, that humans can know nothing more about demons than dogs can know about humans.

> Dogs know that man exists, that he eats, drinks, walks, sleeps, . . . and know also his shape. So it is with humans regarding demons. But you say, humans have a mind; dogs do not. However, the demon mind is more distant from the operation of the human mind than man's mind is from canine sensations.[72]

He concluded that humans would have to accept learned testimony that confirmed the existence of demons and attributed to those demons certain powers and characteristics. Experience could only present humans with bewildering phenomena, which could best be understood by accepting the reality of demons.

Cardano hoped to insert demons into his natural order and to distinguish between natural, preternatural, and supernatural causes. Other chapters in his *De rerum varietate* treat similar themes, such as the possibility of divination and conjuring spirits and the validity of astrology. In other words, his entire book, which was included in the volume on physics when it was printed in his *opera omnia*, aimed to articulate the various types of causes that lay behind observed phenomena.

In 1621, when Robert Burton first published his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, he too was concerned to distinguish supernatural from natural and preternatural causes. But he focused on the causes of melancholy, which he considered a dangerous form of enthusiasm.[73] The first

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[72] "Cognostic canis quod homo est, quod comedit, bibit, ambulat, dormit, non ultra . . . cognoscit & formam: ita homo de daemonibus. At dices, homo mentem habet, canis non habet. Sed mens daemonis longe plus distat opere a mente hominis, quam hominis mens a canis sensu." Ibid. 335.

[73] A good introduction to Burton's concerns about enthusiam and how they relate to his contemporaries, is Canavan (1973).

couple of decades of the seventeenth century witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of radical religious sects. Burton, an ordained Anglican, was understandably worried about the destabilizing effects these various sects were having on society and the Anglican Church. Burton acknowledged the existence of divine inspiration in some cases, notably the prophetic books of the Bible, but was deeply skeptical in most other instances. It is not surprising, then, that he expended so much effort to unmask false enthusiasm, false melancholies, from those arising from true divine inspiration.

The *Anatomy of Melancholy* was an instant success. Six new editions appeared before Burton's death in 1640 and at least another three before the end of the century.[74] Burton lived for books and literally among them; from 1617 until his death he was librarian for Christ Church College, Oxford. He larded his work with quotations from classical and Biblical sources as easily as those from medieval and contemporary works. Scarcely a written source escaped his attention as he composed more than 900 pages describing the causes, cures, and major types of melancholy.

In the first part of his work, which treats the causes or sources of melancholy, Burton offered a long digression on the power and effects of spirits and demons entitled "Digression of Divels, and how they cause melancholy."[75] In subsequent editions, Burton enlarged this section and renamed it "A Digression on the nature of Spirits, bad Angels, or Devils, and how they cause Melancholy."[76] Although Burton drew on a vast array of other sources, he often returned to Psellos and occasionally to Marcus.[77] Burton certainly had access to both Ficino's translation of Psellos' *De daemonibus* as well as later Greek and Latin editions and surely knew the work well.[78] He first distinguished between the action of angels and demons and then

[74] Burton's presentation copy of the first edition is still in the Christ Church College library (shelfmark Ch.Ch. f.2.13), after having been disposed of and reaquired through the generosity of the British Museum.

[75] Burton (1621) 57–71. All citations are from this edition, unless otherwise indicated.

[76] See, for example, Burton (1638). In this edition, the section still extends fifteen pages, from 39–54, but now is printed in folio rather than quarto format.

[77] For example, when Burton quotes Psellos on the various shapes demons can assume, he claims that Marcus testified to this fact. Burton (1621) 59.

[78] There are many copies of Ficino's *Opera omnia* and the various Latin and Greek editions Psellos' text in the Bodleian Library as well as the copies in individual college libraries throughout Oxford.

quoted Psellos, claiming that demons are corporeal and mortal, and that they require nourishment and produce excrement. Further, Burton agreed with Psellos that demons can feel pain when cut with swords, but that their aerial bodies heal almost immediately.[79] By 1620 these were set pieces that most authors borrowed from Psellos, and Burton shows little originality here.

Burton's use of Psellos deviated little from tradition. Psellos provided him with the basic physical description of demons and their abilities to assume various shapes. In his reliance on Psellos' hierarchy of demons, in contrast to competing schemes, Burton revealed his own commitment to Psellosian demonology: "Wherefore of these sublunary devils, though others divide them otherwise according to their several places and offices, Psellus makes six kinds, fiery, aerial, terrestrial, watery, and subterranean devils, besides those satyrs, fairies, nymphs, etc."[80] He arranged his sources into groups supporting Psellos' hierarchy. For Burton, this order of demons was important because it allowed him to attribute a range of melancholies to the actions of different demonic spirits. Burton, following Psellos, accepted that the more ethereal demons to affect directly the mind and imagination and thereby cause melancholy. By contrast, the lower demons, especially the watery and terrestrial, cause melancholy by acting upon the humors and producing an excess of black bile.[81] Burton recognized that there were other causes of melancholy, including the planets and stars, a bad diet, old age, and unfortunate marriage. These other melancholies, however, often exhibited different symptoms and were rarely implicated in the proliferation of radical religious sects, which so worried Burton. For Burton, demons were real and had contributed to the upheaval in society that he witnessed in the first decades of the seventeenth century. His use of Psellos' *De daemonibus* was negative, in the sense that he used it to distinguish false enthusiasm from divine, as a means of separating the true religion from the proliferating false religions. When the Cambridge Platonists Henry More and Ralph Cudworth turned to Psellos' text, they used it in a positive sense, relying on the existence of demons to refute false, materialist and atheist philosophies.

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[79] Burton (1621).
[80] Ibid. 63.
[81] Ibid. 68–70.

Henry More first indicated his familiarity with Psellos' *De daemonibus* in his poem *The praeexistency of the Soul*, published in 1647. Here, More cited Marcus as his authority and then recited the core of Psellos' doctrine on demons.[82] A decade later he returned to Psellos' text and extended his commentary on it. In 1659 he published *The Immortality of the Soul* in which he attempted to refute various tenets of the materialist philosophy, especially Thomas Hobbes's interpretation of Cartesianism. Against this More opposed his own Neoplatonic philosophy of nature which depended on the existence of immaterial active spirits. The whole of book one is devoted to showing that these immaterial spirits exist in nature. In the second book, More explored the relationship between matter and spirit, especially in humans. In other words, he confronted the problem of uniting the material and immaterial worlds. His answer to this problem is not particularly original—he posits the existence of a soul which is both self-moving and can move matter. Finally, in the third book, having established to his own satisfaction the existence of demons, More gave free rein to his curiosity and reflects on what becomes of the human soul after death:

> But my own curiosity, and the desire of gratifying others who love to entertain themselves with speculations of this nature, doe call me out something further, if the very Dignity of the present Matter I am upon doth not justly require me, as will be best seen after the finishing thereof: Which is *concerning the State of the Soule after Death*. Wherein though I may not haply be able to fix my foot so firmly as in the foregoing part of this Treatise, yet I will assert nothing but what shall be reasonable.[83]

He asserted that once souls separate from their earthly bodies they become nothing other than demons. This provided him with the opportunity to survey the vast literature on demons. Although he had in book two cited Psellos' work in passing, in the last book More relies extensively on Psellos' *De daemonibus*. He frequently adopted Psellosian doctrine that had been filtered through earlier writers—in particular, he draws on Cardano's summary of Psellos tract in *De rerum varietate*. He does not, however, shy away from citing Psellos directly. In the fourth chapter, which treats the soul's sensory functions,

[82] More (1647) 264–5.
[83] More (1659) 327.

More leaned heavily on Psellos' work.[84] In discussing whether or not demons and souls have the sense of taste, he again mentions Psellos by name as the authority on how they feed:

> *Marcus* the *Mesopotamian Eremite* in *Psellus*, who tells us that the purer sort of the *Genii* are nourished by drawing in the Aire, as our Spirits are in the Nerves and Arteries; and that other Genii, of a courser kinde, suck in moisture, not with the Mouth as we doe, but as a Sponge does water.[85]

As most authors before him, More too discussed how demons are able to assume different forms at will. Borrowing from Psellos, More suggests that demons accomplish this feat through illusion and by exciting the imagination of their spectators.[86] In the context of this chapter, which includes demonic copulation, More is clearly concerned with the ways that demons can appear as either succubi or incubi, and how they entice witches to consort with them at witches' sabbaths.

By far the most systematic thinker among the Cambridge Neoplatonists was More's close friend and colleague Ralph Cudworth. Like More, Cudworth was deeply troubled by the popularity of Hobbesian mechanical philosophy, which he considered to be the most dangerous form of atheism. Immensely learned and linguistically gifted, Cudworth considered the materialist philosophy championed by Descartes and Gassendi and adopted by philosophers in England, especially Hobbes, as the greatest threat to Christianity and to his own spirit-laden Neoplatonic philosophy. Accordingly, in 1678 he published his *True Intellectual System of the Universe* to refute various atheisms and especially the materialist atheism inherent in Cartesianism.[87] Among his other arguments against Cartesian philosophy, Cudworth pointed to the problem that materialism had in accounting for extraordinary phenomena and miracles as well as such mundane phenomena as human and animal vitality. Indeed, the Cartesian error was to reduce all vitality to "the necessary result of a certain quantity of motion at first indifferently impressed upon the small particles of the matter of this universe turned around in a vortex."[88] Such a conclusion was anathema to Cudworth and

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[84] Ibid. 364–75.
[85] Ibid. 370.
[86] Ibid. 409.
[87] Cudworth was initially a supporter of Cartesianism but quickly came to view it as a form of mechanical atheism. See Sailor (1962). See also Sailor (1988) 511–18.
[88] Cudworth (1678) 149.

seemed to contradict the natural conclusion that should be drawn from miracles and animal vitality. Atheists, according to Cudworth, had to explain these phenomena by pointing to innate human fears, fantasy, dreams, and fraud. It seemed more reasonable to him to accept that they proved the existence "of a God and Providence, or else that there is a rank of understanding beings, invisible, superiour to men, from whence a Deity may be afterwards inferred; namely, these three especially, apparitions, miracles, and prophecies."[89]

In his discussion of apparitions, Cudworth treated the problem of witches and demoniacs, both of which prove "that spirits are not phancies, nor inhabitants of men's brains only, but of the world; as also, that there are some impure spirits, a confirmation of the truth of Christianity."[90] Pairing Psellos and Augustine against Democritus' atomism, Cudworth argued that there are two broad categories of spirits, angelic and demonic, neither one was entirely incorporeal. Cudworth accepted Psellos' distinction between these two, which was based mainly on the radiant splendor of the angels and the "dark and fuliginous obscurity" of demons.[91] He concluded by affirming that because devils possessed some corporeal body, they could be harmed by swords and fire.

In typical analytic precision, Cudworth marshaled together a range of authoritative quotations to distinguish between angels, demons, and simple madmen. He argued that the Jews at the time of Christ had recognized the existence of demons who could possess humans and could be exorcised through proper rituals. Like Burton before him, he was quick to distinguish between demonic possession and other diseases, fevers, dumbness, and deafness. Quoting Plotinus, Cudworth asserts "nor can we think, that the Jews, in our Saviour's time, either supposed all madmen to be daemoniacks, or all daemoniacks madmen (though this latter seems to be asserted by an eminent writer of our own)."[92] Only when the behavior seemed to be extraordinary madness did it indicate "possession or infestation of some devil."[93] At this point Cudworth dispensed with analytic precision and shifted to argument by weight of citation, giving innumerable examples of demonic possession. Psellos' account of a possessed

[89] Ibid. 700.
[90] Ibid. 702.
[91] Ibid. 702.
[92] Ibid. 703.
[93] Ibid. 703–4.

woman who could speak Armenian, despite having no ability to speak nor having ever learned Armenian, played a key role in this argument:

> But when maniacal persons do not only discover secrets, and declare things past, but future also, and, besides this, speak in languages, which they had never learn'd' this puts it out of all doubt and question, that they are not mere madmen, or *Maniaoi*, but daemoniacks, or *Energumeni.* And that since the time of our Saviour Christ there have been often such, may be made evident from the records of credible writers. *Psellus* in his book Περὶ Ἐνεργείας Δαιμόνων, De Operat. Daem. avers it of a certain maniacal woman, that though she knew nothing but her own mother tongue, yet, when a stranger, who as an *Armenian*, was brought into the room to her, she spake to him presently in the *Armenian* language. . . . Whereupon *Psellus* concludes, . . . *Who is there therefore, that considering this oracle of prediction, will conclude* (as some physicians do) *all kind of madness to be nothing but the exorbitant motions of the matter or humours, and not the tragick passions of the daemons.*[94]

Cudworth feared that this might be too remote an example and so added more recent accounts in order "to insist upon this argument of daemoniacks, as well for the vindication of Christianity, as for the conviction of Atheists."[95] By the time Cudworth's *True Intellectual System* appeared he and his Neoplatonic colleagues were fighting a losing battle. His style of argument by weight and exercise of erudition had lost favor by the end of the seventeenth century. More importantly, various forms of mechanistic philosophy were clearly winning the day. The Neoplatonic authorities that he and More and the other Cambridge Neoplatonists relied on did not carry the weight they had two centuries early. Cudworth was so disillusioned by the failure of his *True Intellectual System*, that he never published the remaining two volumes.

Psellos' *De daemonibus*, which appeared for the first time in Ficino's translation in 1497, provided the sixteenth and seventeenth century with a core set of doctrines about demons. It described their physical characteristics, their physiology, and their different abilities to influence humans. These doctrines were recycled numerous times throughout the Renaissance, often substantially the same or quoted from Psellos' text. Nevertheless, the *De daemonibus* was a remarkably flexible text.

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[94] Ibid. 705.
[95] Ibid. 705–6.

For nearly two centuries a wide range of authors in a variety of contexts turned to it as an intellectual resource. Literary authors found a rich source of ideas about demons that they could incorporate into poetry and theater. Catholic polemicists and moderate Protestant biblical commentators adapted Psellosian doctrine to fit their own goals. Demonologists and both proponents and opponents of witchcraft expected Psellos' text to refute and to prove simultaneously the reality of witches and magic. Philosophers and physicians incorporated Psellos' text into their debates about the proper method of investigating nature and recognizing disease. It is not surprising, however, that Cudworth was one of the last major intellectuals to draw on Psellos' *De daemonibus*. The success of the mechanical philosophy and the demystification of nature that occurred during the seventeenth century, along with the rise of the experimental philosophy and the success of mathematics to describe natural phenomena all contributed to a world that no longer needed spirits and demons. By 1700 Psellos' *De daemonibus* was no longer an important intellectual tool, describing an important part of nature, but had become simply a quaint relic of the past.

THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF PSELLOS-STUDIES, WITH ATTENTION TO HIS MOTHER'S *ENCOMIUM*

Anthony Kaldellis

"From obscure and hearsay evidence, Gerard Vossius and le Clerc mention a commentary of Michael Psellus on twenty-four plays of Menander, still extant in MS. at Constantinople. Yet such classic studies seem incompatible with the gravity or dulness of a schoolman, who pored over the categories."[1] Alas, no such commentary is included today among Psellos' multifarious works. Gibbon's dismissive reaction is instead valuable for its own sake, as it reveals the progress that has been made since his time in Psellos-studies, over the past century in particular, and enables us to evaluate its current state and future prospects. For instance, Psellos would now be ranked among the top contenders for the authorship of such a "classic study," and the pool of those contenders would be much larger than Gibbon would have imagined for Byzantium. Moreover, "gravity and dullness" are probably the last qualities that come to mind in connection with one of the most witty, playful, and original of Byzantine authors. The *Chronographia* comes closer to postmodern narrative technique and deeply ironic character-portraiture than virtually any other premodern work of literature. To be fair to Gibbon, the *Chronographia* was published only in 1874, by the Venetian-Greek scholar Konstantinos Sathas, and the century before Sathas shows almost no signs of activity in the field of Psellos-studies. Most likely, all that Gibbon knew came from the *Diatriba de Psellis et eorum scriptis* of the Vatican scholar from Chios, Leo Allatius (1586–1669), which was subsequently incorporated into volume 122 (1889) of J.-P. Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* (cols. 477–536). It is easy to see how Gibbon would have concluded on the basis of this collection that Psellos was a "schoolman who pored over the categories," given that Allatius focused on Aristotelian commentaries and scientific works. Today, by contrast, we know that Psellos considered himself more of a Platonist, as even recent studies

[1] Gibbon, (1994) c. 53: v. 3, p. 419, n. 110.

of his Aristotelian commentaries, which have not yet been published in modern editions, must acknowledge.[2]

The aim of this essay is to present a picture of the current state of Psellos-studies and assess its strengths and weaknesses, breaking the field down loosely into (a) the edition of Psellos' works and (b) their critical analysis and interpretation. A measure of subjectivity and even idiosyncrasy cannot be avoided in any such assessment, especially as the author's views regarding Psellos are on the record. Yet the number of scholars working in this field at the moment is quite small and so their efforts may be presented without losing sight of the general contours of the field's overall development. Largely for purposes of illustration, I have chosen to focus on Psellos' *Encomium* for his own mother, because it represents a nexus of his own autobiographical, philosophical, pedagogical, and rhetorical interests, and may profitably be used to discuss the way in which his works are presented in modern editions. To anticipate later observations, the critical study of Psellos' texts lags behind the concerted and serious effort being made to publish them in modern editions and is disproportionately small in comparison to the importance of the man for Byzantine and indeed European history, both political and intellectual.

A just-released publication by the Pontifical Institute that nicely represents the transitional phase of Psellos-studies by collecting all that has gone before and setting the stage for the next round is P. Moore's exhaustive bibliography of manuscripts and editions of Psellos' works as well as of all discussions of him in modern studies.[3] In the author's words, some 1170 works are attributed to Psellos in manuscripts from the eleventh to the nineteenth centuries, while the bibliography begins in 1497 (with Marsilio Ficino) and goes down to about 2002. This long-anticipated publication (which, at the time of writing, I have not yet seen) will undoubtedly become the future point of reference for the field.

The Teubner edition of Psellos' works by an international group of scholars is also likely to remain with us for some time as the standard edition. Most of its nine volumes published to date are exemplars of meticulous textual criticism, which reflects the direction

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[2] Ierodiakonou (2002), citing previous studies.

[3] Moore (2005). This work releases me from the promise made in Kaldellis (1999) 10 n. 21 and goes beyond anything I would have accomplished.

given to the project by the man who conceived it and set it in motion, L. G. Westerink. Three additional volumes are in preparation: Psellos' letters, currently scattered among two major and various smaller collections, will be assembled by E. N. Papaioannou; funeral orations will be published anew by I. Polemis and P. Agapitos; and a volume containing grammatical and rhetorical works is under preparation by A. R. Littlewood. Publication is not imminent, though the editors of the two first volumes have already issued prolegomena with tables of contents and sample texts.[4] This still leaves a number of texts unpublished. Psellos' commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* is being prepared by L. G. Benakis for the new series *Commentaria in Aristotelem byzantina* (part of the *Corpus philosophorum medii aevi*, a project of the International Union of Academies). K. Ierodiakonou has informed me that she is interested in taking on the commentary/paraphrasis of the *Prior Analytics* as well as, in collaboration with J. Duffy, the commentary on the *De interpretatione*. These texts will give us a whole new Psellos to consider.

On the other hand, some texts will now exist in several editions. After the untimely death of K. Snipes, the fifth edition of the *Chronographia* (for the *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae* this time) has been entrusted to D. R. Reinsch. Dr. Reinsch has informed me that this new edition may take up to 4–5 years to appear but that it will be a definite improvement on previous editions in the reading and emendation of the manuscript. It will also take into account the indirect tradition that comes through Anna Komnene and John Zonaras and will include indexes such as are found in the same scholar's (and A. Kambylis') recent edition of Anna. A German translation will accompany this new edition.

Likewise, Psellos' *Encomium* will soon exist in three editions, namely Sathas' *editio princeps* of 1876; U. Criscuolo's heavily annotated edition and translation of 1989 (see bibliography, below); and the forthcoming edition of Polemis and Agapitos—a rare abundance for any Byzantine text of the middle period. This will no doubt create some minor problems as Byzantinists, unlike classicists, have generally not yet discovered the value of standardized internal divisions for texts (to be used for citation). Texts are generally cited by the page number of the latest edition (or whatever edition each scholar has at hand),

[4] See Papaioannou (1998) and Agapitos and Polemis (2002).

often with no indication of what specific text is being cited if the volume contains many. This poses hermeneutical problems, as it treats all the works of, say, Psellos as a single, undifferentiated, and continuous mass of "information" that does not need to be interpreted with an eye to the specific historical, literary, and philosophical goals and context of each work. Thus, in many cases, the *Encomium* is cited from Sathas' edition without any specific indication that it is in fact the *Encomium* that is being cited. This is not encouraging as scholarship. But this habit also imposes practical difficulties on future editors and readers. Editors often have to include the page numbers of the previous edition in the margins or headings of a new edition (in addition to their own page numbers and whatever other numbering system they wish to include). If they do not, all references to the text prior to their own edition will be made instantly obsolete and interested readers will have to go from volume to volume in order to find the most up-to-date version of the passage that they want. Criscuolo, for example, does not include the Sathas page-numbers in his edition. Instead, he sequences the page numbers of the manuscripts in the margins; has numbered the lines of his own edition; *and* has divided the text into 31 sections, each of which is subdivided into four paragraphs labeled *a* through *d* (à la Stephanus' edition of Plato). This is all very convenient and useful, but will not be replicated by the next editors, Polemis and Agapitos, who will probably make Criscuolo's section-numbers obsolete by requiring citations by the page- or line- or chapter-numbers of their own (Teubner) edition. The only way out of this confusing mess is for the profession as a whole to agree to cite texts by internal sections (which exist even in texts that are universally cited by page number, such as Theophanes Continuatus). Ultimately, only the editors of journals can enforce this practice, but this is unlikely to ever happen because the habit is too ingrained.

Another recent and very helpful addition to the publication of original texts is the citation of parallel or source-passages in a new apparatus between the text and the standard *apparatus criticus* of variant passages and proposed emendations. In the Teubner series, this is generally limited to the classical, philosophical, Biblical, and Patristic origins of what are more or less direct quotations or allusions. But in some circles it has become fashionable to cite in this apparatus every prior passage that bears any kind of verbal resemblance to the one being annotated. This is particularly problematic in Criscuolo's

edition of the *Encomium*. In preparing a translation of this oration, I tracked down every citation given by this editor only to find that the overwhelming majority are merely vaguely similar or represent stock phrases that most Byzantine authors would have known independently of their provenance. This seriously affects the interpretation of the text, for presented in this way it takes on the grotesque appearance of a cento, with phrases within quotation marks found every few lines and requiring 620 footnotes! It is important for this reason to insist on very strict standards of relevance, namely to limit ourselves to passages that the author can reasonably be assumed to have had in mind or before him on his desk, because it is only then that methods of intertextual analysis come legitimately into play.

Before offering an example from Psellos' *Encomium*, let me present one from an ongoing debate regarding classical allusions in Prokopios. In a recent study, I argued that a trial recounted in Prokopios' *Wars* was in fact not strictly historical but based on or, rather, lifted virtually verbatim from accounts of the trial of Socrates. One of the similarities, among others, was the notorious accusation of worshipping *kaina daimonia*, new divinities. A skeptical reviewer performed a TLG search and found that the term occurred also in the history of Cassius Dio (52.36.2), in a rather different context, and concluded that "the use of the phrase in this case . . . simply cannot be used to prove an allusion to Plato."[5] But searches on the TLG, though popular, are misleading because they treat all texts equally, which was certainly not how they were treated in the classical education enjoyed by men such as Prokopios and Psellos. We should not have to remind ourselves that ancient and medieval writers did not enjoy access to the TLG. Plato and the trial of Socrates enjoyed a reputation and iconic status that Cassius Dio lacked (to say nothing of the many other parallels that I found between Prokopios and Plato). In other words, in making these kinds of determinations we have to exercise our literary judgment and not merely our lexicographic proficiency or computer skills. This presupposes an interpretive framework which alone can enable us to clarify what is important and what not.

To give a relevant example from the *Encomium*, on a few occasions Psellos deploys quotations from Plotinos and Porphyry's *Life of Plotinos* in order to explicate his mother's (fundamentally Christian)

[5] Cf. Kaldellis (2004) 99–101 with Greatrex (2003) 66.

asceticism (e.g., 17b and 18a). This, in my view, is an instance of his broader effort to "translate" Christian practice into Neoplatonic terminology and thus make the latter indispensable to the way in which the former was conceived. I plan to discuss this in more detail in a general study on *Hellenism in Byzantium* (focusing on the eleventh through thirteenth centuries).

I will consider additional questions regarding the interpretation of this text below. For now let me say a few words about another problem that likewise involves both textual criticism and interpretation and that will be faced by Psellos-scholars in the coming years. This is the identification of forgeries and false attributions, a problem that is acute in the case of an author as admired and widely imitated as he was. In fact, the incidence of false ascription is a direct and reliable measure of an author's popularity and authority. The lament for the collapse of Hagia Sophia in 989 (*Orat. Min.* 35) has been shown to have been written probably soon after the event itself and so cannot be a work by Psellos.[6] Obviously, this work cannot have been written in order to be subsumed under Psellos' name. On the other hand, the authenticity of the recently published *Historia Syntomos*, questioned by its editor, has been established by a variety of independent arguments, including an attestation and attribution in the preface of the historian Skylitzes; the work's idiosyncratic and positive view of pagan emperors such as Marcus Aurelius (called the most virtuous of all time) and Julian (who asked the gods to assist him in quest for knowledge); its interest in the lives of philosophers and astronomers; the presence of a rhythmical clausula typical of Psellos' style; and the use of descriptive words such as *pantodapos* ("multifarious") and phrases lifted from ancient authors of whom Psellos was fond.[7]

The most conclusive arguments for or against authenticity—barring the rare outside testimony of sources like Skylitzes, which we lack regarding most works ascribed to Psellos—are also paradoxically the most "subjective" ones, namely the interpretive/philosophical ones. Stylistic forms and vocabulary were as easy for Byzantine imitators to copy as they are for us to detect, and probably more so. Such analysis can perhaps exclude a text from the corpus, but cannot

[6] Mango (1988) esp. 167–169.

[7] For these arguments, see, respectively, Snipes (1991); Ljubarskij (1993); and Duffy and Papaioannou (2003).

guarantee its rightful place in it. For this we must ultimately turn to the analysis of their content, which depends on our understanding of Psellos' philosophical concerns and teachings. These, however, probably did not remain static throughout his life. Yet given that our understanding of his thought is in its elementary stages and is likely to be hotly debated in the near future, it would seem that definitive conclusions regarding the authenticity of disputed texts will elude us for some time. I am thinking in particular of the variety of poems and philosophical lectures that are printed as spurious in the Teubner editions as well as of the philosophical chapters "in the tradition of Psellos" contained in one manuscript and published by I. N. Pontikos.[8] Controversy will no doubt also surround the famous dialogue *De daemonibus*, whose authenticity was first questioned by P. Gautier, its latest editor, on the grounds of its manuscript tradition.[9] This work holds a special place in the history of European interest in Psellos, given that it formed, as D. Hayton shows elsewhere in this volume, the foundation of his bizarre reputation in early modern times and since then has earned a prominent place in a spate of mid-twentieth-century publications on the topic of Byzantine demonology (many of which desperately seek for their subject-matter the validation of Psellos' "highbrow" authority). The work does seem to fit a twelfth-century context better,[10] but this question will not be settled before we know a lot more about Psellos than we do now.

One approach to this problem is to identify "signature" themes that recur in works such as the *Chronographia* and the *Encomium* whose authenticity is beyond doubt and to then use them as provisional criteria for discussing others. This is, of course, hardly an infallible or exhaustive method, as not all of Psellos' works are bound to revolve around the same themes. Still, in this way we may identify the authorial traits that he chose to project in his most daring and revealing works. We find, then, in the *Encomium*, an irresistible urge to convert texts written about others into more or less straight autobiography; the exaltation of pagan thinkers and pagan wisdom in the face of an explicit acknowledgment of their condemnation in many ecclesiastical and monastic circles; a tendency to insist on the materiality of *physis* and the physical dimension of human life such

[8] Pontikos (1992).
[9] Gautier (1980).
[10] See Angold (1995) 496–499.

as physical beauty, in a conscious attempt to balance the fixation of Orthodox ideology on the spiritual;[11] and an exaltation of the intellectual virtues, such as the burning desire to know about all aspects of the world. The same themes are also to be found in the *Chronographia*, written about a decade after the *Encomium*.

Questions of interpretation are unavoidable if we are to determine the exact extent of Psellos' corpus, which in any case runs well into the thousands of pages, somewhere between the lengths of Plato and Aristotle. But despite the dynamism that has characterized the publication of Psellos' texts in the past twenty years, there has been little by way of biographical and interpretive work. Psellos' huge historical, literary, and philosophical importance for Byzantium is at once an indictment of, and also an excuse for, this neglect. In addition, what exists by way of studies on Psellos is just about evenly divided among English, French, German, and Italian scholarship and there are important contributions in Russian and modern Greek as well. This is a lot to ask in an age of diminishing linguistic competence of potential students who must also master some the most intractable and esoteric Greek prose (in addition, perhaps, to Latin). This is one reason why Psellos is and will remain inaccessible.

We lack a basic biography, unless one accepts the well-documented 44-page introduction to R. Volk's dissertation on medical references in Psellos' works. The book on Psellos by the recently deceased Russian historian J. Ljubarskij is more a collection of studies than an integrated monograph or biography. A translation into Greek has just now been released—by Kanaki, who publishes Byzantine texts with accompanying translations—though this will make it only marginally more accessible to the wider scholarly public.[12] A full biography has been announced by the Dutch scholar Eva de Vries-van der Velden (to be written perhaps in English),[13] and one of Psellos' modern Greek translators, Vrasidas Karalis (who teaches in Australia), has expressed to me his interest in a similar project. I confess that I too am often sorely tempted by the idea. However, it is unlikely that any of these projects will materialize soon.

A major preliminary to any biography will have to be the dating of Psellos' works. Most of the imperial and funeral orations can be

[11] See below and Kaldellis (1999) 25.
[12] Volk (1990); Ljubarskij (2004).
[13] de Vries-van der Velden (1996).

dated approximately or exactly. E. Papaioannou has indicated to me that about a fifth or sixth of Psellos' 500 letters can be so dated as well (excluding here the philosophical and scientific treatises and lectures that are cast in the form of letters). This will be an additional and important contribution of Papaioannou's forthcoming edition of the letters. That leaves Psellos' philosophical treatises and lectures to his students. The main uncertainty that surrounds them is whether and to what degree he resumed teaching after returning to the capital from his Bithynian monastic retreat in 1056. It would seem that he did resume teaching, as his student John Italos was not appointed "Consul of the Philosophers" in his place until the 1070s. However, at the end of the *Encomium* (written in 1054–1055), Psellos lists his own intellectual interests and the subjects of the courses that he taught under Constantine IX Monomachos. In a separate study I show that a fairly close albeit partial correspondence can be demonstrated between the list of Christian subjects that he cites there and the exegetical lectures that have recently been published as his *Theologica* (in two volumes of unequal length). If the *Theologica* can be assigned to the reign of Monomachos, and specifically to the years after 1047, then perhaps so too can Psellos' other lectures on philosophical and scientific topics.[14]

One of the major obstacles in writing a biography of Psellos lies in the fact that his life was in all ways bound up with the history and specifically with the politics of the eventful eleventh century. This makes him an interesting figure, to say the least—not a few historians have blamed him personally (and surely prematurely) for the decline of Byzantium in those years—yet in the past century the history of his times has suffered the same neglect as has he himself. There are no up-to-date and fully documented surveys and, in the fast-paced world of articles and conferences, no consensus has emerged regarding the causes of Byzantium's decline. The section of M. Angold's general survey of the years 1025–1204 that overlaps with Psellos' life is, in my view, much too disorganized and brief to serve as a guide (in contrast to his coverage of the Komnenian empire, which is excellent). J. C. Cheynet's study of the political background is indispensable but, despite its length, too focused to meet this need. A. Kazhdan and A. W. Epstein's study of cultural change is groundbreaking, but subsumes the characteristic developments of the eleventh century

[14] Kaldellis (2005).

beneath those of the much "louder" twelfth. Psellos, we must remember, was a lonely figure: remove him and the eleventh century becomes one of the bleakest in Byzantine history from a literary point of view. All discussions of the so-called revival of the eleventh century refer primarily or exclusively to him, plus a few epigrams by Christopher of Mytilene and John Mauropous and, in some cases, the works of Symeon the New Theologian. Interest in the period is currently waxing in Greece itself. The past few years have witnessed the publication of a massive study of the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos by S. Hondridou, which is thorough if at times unpersuasive (especially regarding military matters), as well as the papers of a conference on the question of decline in the eleventh century. Alas, these two volumes will remain both physically and linguistically inaccessible to the majority of Psellos-scholars.[15]

Granted that Psellos' biographer might just have to rewrite the history of his times, still very little has been written about this most fascinating man who, in many ways, is quite accessible. His family was one of the only *private* Byzantine families whose fortunes we can track for over three generations (a major source for this is the *Encomium*). His 500 or so letters allow us to place him within a broader social circle of widely-placed correspondents. We can follow his political career in some detail for over thirty years. We have hundreds of his classroom lectures and can compare his philosophical pronouncements to his pedagogical practice. Almost all of his works teem with autobiographical insights and confessions. And this is to say nothing of the fact that he is our chief historical source for the period, through his literary masterpiece the *Chronographia* and over a dozen panegyrical orations. To put all this in perspective, had any philosopher in the medieval *west* argued that all events should be understood in terms of natural causes for which God is only *indirectly* responsible; had he lectured in the capital and written treatises on virtually every topic under (and beyond) the sun, which he conveniently lists for us at the end of the *Encomium*; had he performed scientific experiments in his classroom to demonstrate the theories of Archimedes; had he argued that Christians should not take all in Scripture at face value and should not ignore what the

[15] See, respectively, Angold, (1984); Cheynet (1990); Kazhdan and Epstein (1985); Hondridou (2002); and Vlyssidou (2003).

pagan Greeks had said regarding God; well, medievalists would then have undoubtedly proclaimed a new Age of Western Thought or, at least, an Eleventh-Century Renaissance. Had he, in addition, been a high official of a powerful Christian empire and shaped its policies to the extent of meddling in matters of succession, then there would undoubtedly have been a library's worth of scholarly discussion of his life, thought, and historical background.

But Psellos was a Byzantine, and so he still languishes in relative obscurity. Most discussions of Psellos consist of derivative references or typecast summaries of his "world-view" that recycle the same quotations and suffer from the same lack of critical analysis and biographical context. The *Encomium* has been especially abused here, as few have it from the original rather than from Charles Diehl's romantic summary. There is much that is fascinating and perplexing about this text, but only a few passages have made it into the circuit of recycled quotations. Of critical bibliography we have only one or two articles of modest length and scope; also Criscuolo's 68-page introduction, which deals largely with Psellos' rhetorical and philosophical models and says almost nothing about what he did with them in the *Encomium* itself; an entry in A. Sideras' compendium of Byzantine funeral orations, which devotes barely a full page of text to the *Encomium* and does not deal with questions of literary interpretation; and scattered references in M. Hinterberger's monograph on autobiography in Byzantium.[16] And this may be considered a *good* crop of studies for any of Psellos' works, the *Chronographia* excepted of course.

Consider, on the other hand, some of the reasons why this text ought to have been intensely and extensively studied. It contains autobiographical recollections about childhood and primary education; two of its main characters are women (a mother and sister) and the work offers a rare but here sustained look at private family life in Byzantium (it even presents monasticism from the point of view of a family's history); it was written for defensive and self-serving reasons in the year of the break between the two Churches (ca. 1054–1055) by a man involved in it; and it concludes with a long and equally defensive list of Psellos' intellectual interests and subjects that he taught to his students. Moreover, it is a highly idiosyncratic work

[16] Diehl (1908) c. 11; Sideras (1994) 130–133; Hinterberger (1999) passim.

that decisively breaks with Byzantine conventions for all that it masterfully works through them. Psellos cynically exploits Byzantine religious ideals in order to create a saint—his mother—behind whom to hide at a time when his presence at the court and his dubious philosophical beliefs were coming under renewed scrutiny and when he was forced for political reasons to make an odious decision: to accept tonsure as a monk. Yet—unique among Byzantine writers—Psellos maintains throughout the *Encomium* a clear separation between his mother's "philosophy," namely the ascetic strictures of Orthodoxy, and his own, which is bookish and vaguely pagan in content. This translates, for instance, into a calculated violation of expectations: he repeatedly tells us that as a monk now he ought not to dwell on the worldly and physical aspects of his subject but only the spiritual ones, and yet he goes on nevertheless to dwell on precisely the physical beauty of his mother and sister. This is done in direct violation of the precedent established by Gregory of Nazianzos whose funeral orations he was following here: they quite properly had said not a word about those things which they had explicitly disavowed and disclaimed on Christian grounds.[17]

Why have the *Encomium*, despite its attractions and eccentricities, and Psellos in general received so little attention? Here we can only speculate, yet we ought to if the current momentum behind the publication of his works is to be carried over into the realm of literary and philosophical interpretation. Psellos deserves to be brought to the forefront of medieval and European intellectual history, where, despite long neglect, he rightly belongs. Moreover, this will be to the benefit of Byzantine studies as a whole, which currently still suffer from a (partly self-imposed) isolation. Much depends on whether Byzantinists of the next generation have the nerve to stake the prominence and even survival of their field on exceptional figures such as Psellos.

First, it has only recently been recognized that there *is* a realm of literary interpretation in Byzantine studies.[18] If the purpose of literary analysis is to explain why we enjoy reading a certain work and what it does for us morally, aesthetically, and philosophically,

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[17] These aspects of the *Encomium* are disussed in detail in my forthcoming study on *Hellenism in Byzantium* as well as in the introduction to a volume in translation of all texts by Psellos that relate to his family history (see below).

[18] See Littlewood (2005).

it can easily be seen why until recently there have been no such studies in our field, for no one, or at any rate very few of us, actually *enjoys* reading Byzantine texts in the first place. Second, our field has been notoriously conservative and has therefore remained to a considerable degree trapped within largely obsolete nineteenth-century modes of historicist analysis. Stereotypes about Orthodox religiosity and imperial rhetoric have been elevated to the status of the "essence" of Byzantium and discussions of literary works aim to validate those stereotypes over and over again. According to this method, Psellos' *Encomium* is not the idiosyncratic work of an eccentric philosopher, but yet another example of the genre of the funeral oration, with a dose of the genre of hagiography thrown in. Models here receive far more attention than individuality, originality, and authorial intention. In short, it is precisely Psellos' individuality that has frightened away potential students: the emphasis in our field on predictability and unchanging forms does not prepare us well for such deviant figures. Fortunately, in the past generation this has begun to change as the study of Byzantium is catching up to the twentieth century and as fewer scholars are interested in reciting tired platitudes about the Essence of Byzantium or the Byzantine Mind. The emphasis for some time now has been on dynamic cultural change, dissidence, and originality, in other words on the exceptions to the old rules. The book by Kazhdan and Epstein mentioned above is symptomatic of this gradual transformation and, despite its limitations, has encouraged and authorized further research along these lines.

We should not, however, underestimate the challenges set before those who attempt close readings of Psellos' works. For starters, our appreciation of Byzantine style is rudimentary. How many of us can truly grasp in the original the stylistic categories employed by Photios in his *Bibliotheca* to evaluate classical and Byzantine authors? We have gotten as far as "high," "low," and "intermediate" levels of style, and can perhaps recognize archaism and classicism,[19] but we can also easily see how elementary such categories are for the discussion of, say, English literature. With some difficulty is it nevertheless possible to identify the distinctive voices of Edward Gibbon, Adam Smith, and David Hume, though they were contemporaries and wrote in a similar style on roughly the same kinds of issues. Can we do the

[19] See Ševčenko (1981).

same with any two Byzantine authors of the same level (regardless of their temporal separation)? Is there any reason to believe that those differences do not exist there as they do among modern authors? I think not, though I cannot prove it here. I also believe it is possible to identify works of Psellos that have their origin in classroom lectures as opposed to those that were originally meant for the court, to say nothing of works that were never intended to be performed orally at all. I do not know how this thesis can be presented on paper as it stems from reading these works aloud using a more or less modern Greek pronunciation.

Moreover, we are now almost entirely cut off from the Byzantine rhetorical tradition, those "manuals of style" and theoretical treatises that actually instructed the Byzantines how to compose. We have, it is true, become very adept at identifying the models prescribed by Menander Rhetor for imperial orations in all extant panegyrics as well as in other genres such as historiography and hagiography. But that is because Menander has been translated and because we Byzantine historians are more sensitive to "propaganda" and "ideology" than we are to literary nuance and technique. A perusal of the corpus of extant rhetorical manuals should convince us that we are missing a lot here, including straightfaced discussions of techniques of literary representation that have recently been "rediscovered" with much fanfare by postmodern theorists. Yet to do more than this requires a careful and systematic reading of the texts in Walz or Spengel, to say nothing of the Byzantine lexika, and who has the patience, skill, and interest for that? To my knowledge, there is only one full-length study that is grounded in an engagement with the details of this tradition, though unfortunately it does not translate its findings into an actual literary analysis of extant Byzantine texts and is very selective to begin with.[20] The monograph that E. Papaioannou is writing on *The Rhetorical Autography of Michael Psellos: Mimesis in Pre-Modern Greek Literature*, promises to fill this gap and hopefully it will spark a broader discussion as well. (Speaking of lexika, once Psellos' works are finally published, we should think of drawing up a concordance.)

Another obstacle to the study and understanding of many of Psellos' works is the fact that his philosophical objectives are not represented

[20] Kustas (1973).

in our scholarly training. Scholars who write on Psellos have traditionally been and are likely to continue to be either historians of the eleventh century or philologists. Neither discipline requires a training in ancient philosophy and its Christian adaptations. On top of the difficulty of reading Psellos himself, mastering the languages in which the scholarship is written, and knowing enough about Byzantium in order to situate him in his historical context, one must also know Plato intimately in addition to the many other philosophical traditions and hermeneutical schools with which Psellos himself was familiar. This would seem to be an almost impossible demand, and scholars who are good at ancient philosophy stick to that field and avoid "esoteric" figures such as Psellos, who will secure them no academic recognition even among Byzantinists. They have better things to do—given how controversial Plato himself still is—than to spend time on how a lonely Byzantine of the eleventh century reinterpreted Neoplatonism and Christian thought. Moreover, to understand what Psellos was up to in many of his works one would actually have to adopt the outlook of a Platonist and consider seriously the possibility that a human being can do nothing better in his life than to philosophize and that all other intellectual and non-intellectual activities must be subordinated to or already are somehow subordinate to philosophy. These premises are obviously stated in many of Psellos' works, yet I know of no scholar who has written on him who either believes them or fully appreciates what it means to believe them. Hence, Psellos is presented in much of the literature as an orator who only pretended to be a philosopher, when in fact, as I have argued, the balance probably tilted in the opposite direction. We Byzantinists are used to rhetoric, but we have little or no precedent for someone who took philosophy seriously, so we tend not to see it on the few occasions when it occurs.

We come, finally, to what is probably the single greatest obstacle for the future development of Psellos-studies. This is the Great Unmentionable of our field, what everyone knows to be true but few discuss publicly, namely the steady decline in philological skill in Greek among students and, consequently, among professional Byzantinists as well. Fewer and fewer of us are capable of preparing accurate critical editions of previously unpublished texts as well as accurate translations of previously untranslated texts. Though I do not attend many conferences, I suspect that there is little discussion going on regarding the linguistic training that future Byzantinists

are receiving in North American institutions in particular. Yet everything depends on this, as conferences are now being organized on the newly discovered topic of Byzantine literature and their proceedings published, sometimes calling for a new history of the topic. Yet I find little discussion there of the *language* in which this literature was written and of what we need to do in order to prepare ourselves for its close study. Most of the arguments and proposals that are advanced therein could just as well apply to translated texts.

It is difficult to document this process, but Psellos has certainly suffered from it because the prose of many of his works is exceptionally difficult and obscure, the *Encomium* being a case in point. Glancing at the database of Resources for Byzantine Studies in North American Graduate Schools (maintained on the website of Dumbarton Oaks), we find that art-historians outnumber traditional historians by a 2:1 ratio and that the latter are about equal in number to scholars with positions in religion or late antiquity. Of roughly 65 people on the list, only 6 or 7 can be said to be philologists (not counting Latinists), but 4 of these have published extensively on Psellos. Obviously, any of their 60 colleagues may in fact be trained philologists, but the point is that their positions do not require that (and none of them have published much on Psellos). If circumstance or virtue has given them proficiency in Greek, it is not something that they will easily pass on to their students institutionally, especially in the U.S. where linguistic skills, even in English, are not highly valued by the society at large. I have become very skeptical of the linguistic skills ostensibly required by history departments, in both ancient and modern languages, and I do not see many prospective Byzantinists choosing to attend departments of classics (where linguistic standards are obviously higher but also gradually falling). The nine volumes of Psellos' works in the Teubner series were prepared by long-established and philologically trained scholars with past experience in such work. Granted, some of the volumes that are now in preparation have been undertaken by younger scholars, but *all* are native speakers of Greek. Might this be indicative of long-term future trends, perhaps of a new division of labor among Byzantinists?

We ought to be realistic about this, at least: studies of authors and texts tend to follow upon their translation. We therefore desperately need translations of Psellos' works if he is to speak to the community of Byzantinists, to say nothing of the broader audience that alone can secure for him the recognition that he deserves. I wish to

close this statement with the announcement of a new translation project for Psellos' works and an invitation for all who are interested to participate. At the close of the symposium on Psellos at Notre Dame I proposed that we pool our resources and interests in precisely such a thematically organized, multi-volume project. Since then we have jointly outlined five volumes on (a) women and the family (including the *Encomium*, which is now complete and annotated); (b) education; (c) science and the occult; (d) literary and aesthetic criticism; and (e) epistolography and friendship. Specific works have been assigned to each volume. Editorial supervision over each will be entrusted to one scholar who has specialized in that aspect of Psellos' work, but anyone qualified is invited to contribute translations and introductions to the separate works. As many of us have independently and for years been translating texts that fall in these categories, some volumes are already close to completion. The first, containing all of Psellos' works on his family (with separate introductions and commentaries) is finished and tentatively entitled *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters in Byzantium: The Family Life of Michael Psellos*. We hope that this effort will contribute to bridging the gap between the publication of Psellos' works and their comparative neglect in the secondary literature. Court orator, professor of philosophy, historian, advisor to the emperors of eleventh-century Byzantium, Michael Psellos is still one of the best kept secrets in European history.

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